

**The Montreal Children's Hospital Trauma Programs team up
with The Montreal Canadiens' Christopher Higgins**

Launch of Concussion & Return to Sports Program and Concussion KiT aimed at preventing brain injuries, raising awareness of symptoms and ensuring a safe return to sports

Montreal, December 3, 2007— The Montreal Children's Hospital of the MUHC joins forces with Montreal Canadiens forward, Christopher Higgins to raise awareness about how to prevent, treat and recover from a concussion.

"We are very excited to be working with Christopher Higgins on this project," says Debbie Friedman, Director of Trauma. "Professional athletes' willingness to share their stories has most definitely been appreciated and is key in raising awareness about the potentially serious consequences of concussions. However, they aren't the only ones sidelined by this problem; kids are also affected by this form of brain injury. The consequences can be devastating, affecting the child or teen's academic performance, social well-being and return to sports and activities."

A concussion is a disturbance in brain function that can be caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head, jaw or body, or by a sudden acceleration or deceleration. Kids can sustain concussions while participating in many types of sports and recreational activities such as, hockey, soccer, football, rugby, basketball, snowboarding, skiing, wheel sports, etc.

"At the Montreal Children's Hospital, each year, approximately 1000 patients having sustained a sports-related concussion are treated by our Trauma Programs," says Carlo Galli, MCH Trauma Coordinator. According to the Canadian Pediatric Society, the estimated incidence of traumatic brain injury including concussions in children 15 years of age and younger is 180 per 100,000 annually. This accounts for more than 10% of all visits to Emergency Departments. Friedman adds that trauma experts feel that the number of concussions is most probably even higher since not all children and teens come to the ER; many are managed by community physicians.

The MCH has expanded its Concussion and Return to Sports Program and has launched an innovative *Concussion KiT*. The *Concussion KiT* is a tool designed to increase the awareness among coaches, sporting associations, parents, and athletes with respect to preventing, recognizing, and managing concussions in sports. We have already been presenting to organized sports associations. To date, the reaction to the *KiT* has been very positive.

"We look forward to working with Mr. Higgins on a number of new trauma and injury prevention initiatives," says Ms. Friedman. "Having the support of such a well-known and well-respected athlete will certainly help us get our message across and will raise awareness about injury prevention, sportsmanship, teamwork, and not playing through an injury."

"I've been playing hockey since I was 4 years old. I am very fortunate not to have suffered a concussion, but I've seen first hand the impact this type of injury has had on my teammates and rivals," says Mr. Higgins. "It is important that kids learn to play smart, wear the proper equipment and respect the rules of the game. I look forward to working with the members of the Trauma Programs at The Montreal Children's Hospital to drive these points home and to help kids play safe."

For more information please call:

Lisa Dutton

Manager, Public Relations and Communications

L'Hôpital de Montréal pour enfants du Centre universitaire de santé McGill

(514) 412-4307