



## News release

February 11, 2010

### **Budget 2010 strikes at Wellness**

Striking the Right Balance, the Government of Alberta's 2010-11 budget will adversely impact Alberta's wellness. The cuts to Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation and Alberta Culture and Community Spirit will have indelible ramifications for Alberta's largest volunteer sector, sport and the consequences will be felt throughout from provincial sport organizations to local clubs. Unless efficiencies can be found in a sector which already receives minimal funding from government, does not typically receive a high level of charitable support from the public, and already operates on a shoe-string budget, participants will bear the cost. This will only further exclude Albertan's from being physically active and we firmly believe that this needs to be addressed. We need to put the wellness back into Alberta's health and wellness.

While we can celebrate that infrastructure investment continues (albeit at lower levels), the budget cuts come at a time where sport can benefit from a nexus of opportunity not seen in many years. The cuts come at the end of a four year sport cycle in which our (winter) athletes are preparing to compete in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. They come at a time when Alberta's Sport Plan, A New Century for Amateur Sport - From Participation to Excellence is due for renewal. They come at a time when most Albertans acknowledge the correlation between decreasing physical activity and increasing health care expenditures whether it is due to obesity, diabetes, and other preventable illnesses. Finally, cuts come at a time when the Government of Alberta has established a Cultural Policy and is in the process of establishing a Recreation Policy where sport has been sadly excluded. With this crisis of opportunity, there is a small window to strike the right balance.

First and foremost, we believe that Alberta needs to make the right investments. Alberta requires a new sport plan which is based on a provincial sport policy. Sport investments should be based on both the plan and policy and these require input from the entire sport continuum. The Edmonton Sport Council, the Calgary Sport Council, and Sport Alberta represent this continuum from physical literacy to sport for life and we look forward to taking an active role in providing meaningful input to assist the Alberta government in developing a new way forward for sport in Alberta.

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