

law enforcement. The strategy balances health goals with enforcement, viewing prevention as the first and best line of defence against drug abuse.

Further encouraging healthy lifestyles is the emergence of holistic medicine. Concerned with the interdependent physical, mental and social well-being of individuals, holistic medicine attempts to treat the person as an integrated whole. Aimed at providing a state of complete healthiness, treatment may range from natural food diets and stress-management techniques to massage therapy or yoga.

### Working towards Health

Studies have shown that when compared, physically fit employees are more productive, take fewer sick days and generally enjoy higher morale than their less physically active counterparts. It is not surprising then that the Canadian business sector is an active supporter of health promotion. Today, companies of all types and sizes are building fitness facilities, sponsoring stress-management programs and designing healthful physical work environments.

Just to cite an example of what one Canadian company is doing, Shell Canada Ltd. — a petroleum company — offers its employees a health insurance plan that covers expenses such as medication, dental work and psychological counselling. Regular medical check-ups are also provided, and medical care is available at the company's special health clinics.

To encourage physical fitness, Shell has built fitness facilities at all its work sites. The larger facilities offer programs that range from aerobics to weightlifting, and all are under the supervision of trained fitness instructors. In

Photo : Four By Five Inc.



Physical fitness has become a top priority for Canadians.

addition, Shell hires nutritionists to design healthy cafeteria menus and to run nutrition education programs for employees and their families. The company also offers professional counselling for alcohol and drug abusers and provides sophisticated stress-management programs to help employees deal effectively with one of today's biggest health problems.

Like many Canadian companies, Shell has recently implemented a strategy to phase out smoking in the workplace. But the company has gone one step further in that it also provides special smoking cessation programs to assist its employees in "butting out."

### Clearing the Air

The Shell no-smoking policy is part of a nationwide campaign for a smoke-free environment. Tobacco use is

the leading cause of preventable health problems, including lung cancer, in Canada — a fact that has sparked Canadians in all sectors into action.

Many major Canadian transportation carriers, for example, now offer no-smoking services. The country's largest airline, Air Canada, pioneered non-smoking flights in North America in 1986, extending the ban to more than 80 per cent of its flights last fall.

One of the world's most aggressive no-smoking campaigns was launched by the Canadian government three years ago. Aimed at producing a generation of non-smokers by the year 2000, the campaign features information programs, advertising, legislation, and research on tobacco addiction and the health consequences of smoking. Two years ago, the federal government, acting as Canada's largest employer, restricted smoking to specially designated areas throughout the public service. And as of January 1, 1989, smoking is prohibited in all federal workplaces.

The government of Canada has also taken action to promote health by stopping the promotion of smoking. Last June, it passed groundbreaking legislation that bans most forms of tobacco advertising; the law also requires that warning labels and lists of toxic constituents be printed on cigarette packages. Such efforts, together with other initiatives, are successfully clearing the air. Today, the majority of Canadians are non-smokers and tobacco use is rapidly on the decline.

The no-smoking trend is an example of Canada's expanding understanding of health. Increasing emphasis is now being placed on creating healthy social and physical environments in homes, schools, the workplace and the public setting at large.

The Canadian Healthy Cities Project, for example, aims to create cities conducive to good health. Twelve cities have joined the project, examining local issues such as housing, transportation, waste management, urban planning, economic development, and education, health and social services with an eye to their impact on health. The Healthy Cities Project has proven so successful in developing beneficial public policy that the World Health Organization has helped launch similar projects in several cities abroad.

The health revolution in Canada has thus grown from influencing individual lifestyle choices to progressively encompassing all sectors of society and the environment. A truly national phenomenon of unprecedented proportions, the vital signs of improving Canadian health are everywhere.