

## Green Shield Canada Foundation Launches Frontline Care Program to Directly Impact the Health of Marginalized Canadians

**March 5, 2015 (Calgary, AB)** – The Green Shield Canada Foundation (GSCF) announces the launch of its Frontline Care™ program, a five-year plan to fund access to better health care for uninsured and underinsured Canadians. By providing grants to Canadian registered charitable, non-profit organizations, GSCF plans to positively and directly impact the health of marginalized Canadians. According to the Canadian Medical Association, poverty is the number one factor in determining whether Canadians live long, healthy lives. Marginalized Canadians find it extremely difficult to access mainstream health care. They feel stigmatized, judged and unsupported.

Through increasing access to basic health care for the uninsured and underinsured, GSCF Frontline Care will help open doors to dental health, vision health, prescription drugs and health supports (including disease management and mental health) for Canadians who might not otherwise receive it. This includes marginalized individuals, such as homeless, working poor and those on social assistance. GSCF also seeks to increase access to a “navigator” that connects individuals to complementary supports, such as jobs, education, housing, food and other social determinants of health.

“There are obvious gaps in the provision of health care, and we feel it’s important to help narrow those gaps by providing support for Frontline Care to organizations in communities where GSC operates,” says Sarah Saso, executive director, Green Shield Canada Foundation. “Through our Foundation, we are excited to assist four strategic projects with funding of more than \$3.5 million. The projects, launching across Canada, will connect marginalized individuals to the basic health care resources they deserve to receive.”

Green Shield Canada Foundation Frontline Care Partners:

- **Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS)** empowers people to overcome the challenges of poverty and reach their full potential through integrated health care, education and housing services.
- **211**, similar to 911 or 311, is a three digit phone number and online service that Canadians can access for help when seeking information or services to deal with life’s challenges. Available 24/7/365 and in over 150 languages.
- **Welcome Hall Mission** offers personalized solutions to marginalized Montrealers. On either a short- or long-term basis, the mission seeks to support and accompany individuals as they move towards healthy, autonomous living.
- **Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services** improves health outcomes for Toronto’s most vulnerable immigrants, refugees and their communities.

“Calgary Urban Project Society is an ideal partner to kick off our Frontline Care program, aligning with the core pillars of the GSCF,” says Saso. “CUPS’ health care programs are focused on individuals and families in need of primary care, dental care, mental health care, vision care, chronic disease management and hepatitis C treatment.”

The Foundation, with the Frontline Care program, has adopted the five core principles of GSC's Health Vision; this includes: 1) all Canadians should have access to health care; 2) the Canadian health care system should be affordable and sustainable; 3) Canadians should be encouraged to take personal ownership and responsibility for their health; 4) there are roles for multiple stakeholders in the provision of health care including the public sector, the private sector and the individual citizen); and 5) best practice, transparency and accountability should be encouraged in the provision of health care.

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#### **About Green Shield Canada Foundation (GSCF)**

Green Shield Canada, the country's only national not-for-profit health and dental benefits specialist, created the Green Shield Canada Foundation in 1992 to act as a catalyst, supporting innovative ideas that pave the way for fundamental, big-picture change in Canadian health care. Its strategy is designed to build community capacity, strengthen public policy and advance knowledge in the health care field to ensure long-term change and address urgent needs. For additional information, please visit [greenshield.ca](http://greenshield.ca).

#### **About Green Shield Canada (GSC)**

GSC is a benefits specialist. As Canada's only national not-for-profit health and dental specialist, their reason for being is the enhancement of the common good. GSC seeks innovative ways to improve access to better health for Canadians. From coast-to-coast, their service delivery includes drug, dental, extended health care, vision, hospital and travel benefits for groups and individuals, as well as administration services. Supported by cost containment strategies, advanced technology and exceptional customer service, they create customized programs for over one and a half million plan participants nationwide. GSC is not-for-profit organization with a purpose. At GSC, corporate social responsibility is about the way it integrates economic, social, and environmental considerations into its decision-making processes and day-to-day operations. GSC's Frontline Care program supports the health and wellness of marginalized Canadian by contributing funds annually for projects that focus on improving access to health care for uninsured and underinsured populations in Canada (the homeless, the working poor, those on social assistance). Learn more at [greenshield.ca](http://greenshield.ca)

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