



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Edmonton Multicultural Coalition celebrates a milestone**

Edmonton, November 23, 2012

Edmonton Multicultural Coalition (the Coalition) will hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations on Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup> 2012 at the Alberta Avenue Community Hall from 5.30 to 10.30pm. This year marks a milestone since the Coalition was started. Although the Coalition was formally incorporated in 2007, it already began life in 2002.

The genesis of the Coalition can be traced to an innovative project spearheaded by the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative in 2002. The project aimed at developing civic space and engagement for ethno-cultural communities in the City of Edmonton. Initially funded by Health Canada through the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI), more than 120 community members participated in 36 policy education workshops in which four issues were identified as major determinants of holistic ethno-cultural communities' health — Unequal access to employment opportunities; limited access to educational opportunities; inability to access appropriate health services and social and civic exclusion.

Participants of a broad consultation process decided to form a multicultural coalition to articulate and advocate a policy agenda for health and well-being addressing the identified four priority issues in collaboration with government and community organizations. Dr. Lucenia Ortiz Coordinated the formation of the Coalition initiated and led by 10 various ethno-cultural communities in Edmonton who shared a vision of inclusive and equitable society. Although the Coalition was an initiative of Multicultural Health Brokers Coop (est. 1995) and continues to partner with the Coop, it has grown in leaps and bounds to acquire a life of its own.

During last year's AGM, members voted to change the name from Multicultural Coalition for Equity in Health and Well Being to Edmonton Multicultural Coalition. To broaden the range and scope of its activities to reflect changing times, the board recommended and members approved to seek registration as a fully-fledged charity. A necessary element for the development of the Coalition's group solidarity included the ability to move beyond speaking for a specific ethnic minority group to speaking on behalf of immigrants as a whole.

This year' AGM which doubles up as 10th Anniversary celebrations will include exhibitions from Coalition's members principally from the following ethno cultural communities: Cambodian, Chilean, Chinese, Colombian, Congolese, Croatian, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Filipino, Jamaican, Kenyan, Korean, Kurdish, Liberian, Mexican, Nepalese, Oromo, Pakistani, Rwandese, Sierra Leonean, Somali, Sudanese (Dinka), Sudanese (Luo/Nuer), Ugandan and Zimbabwean.

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