



*Canadian Society for Vascular Surgery*

*Société canadienne de chirurgie vasculaire*

**For immediate release Sept 8, 2008**

## **Simple Ultrasound Could Save Many Seniors' Lives Canadian Vascular Surgeons Call for National Screening Program**

OTTAWA, September 8, 2008 —The Canadian Society for Vascular Surgery today is calling for a national screening program for abdominal aortic aneurysm screening. There is strong and growing evidence indicating that identifying abdominal aneurysms before they rupture is effective in cutting the death rate in half for those at risk.

Five per cent of men and under one per cent of women over the age of 65 have an abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA). The Society's research reveals that ultrasound screening for AAA among men aged 65 to 75 could be as cost effective as saving a life by mammography. The cost of a limited abdominal ultrasound scan to screen for aortic aneurysm in Ontario, under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan, is less than \$55.

"Canada's aging population will increase the number of individuals at risk for AAAs and if you have one, there is a good chance that it will rupture," says Dr. Thomas Lindsay, FRCSC, a vascular surgeon with Toronto's University Health Network and national spokesperson for the Canadian Society for Vascular Surgery. He stresses that, "Canada's time has come for a national screening program."

The Canadian Society for Vascular Surgery is calling on all national, provincial and territorial health ministries to develop screening programs for AAA to prevent unnecessary deaths. In the USA screening is available to all senior citizens as part of their *Welcome to Medicare* examination. The UK government decided on a screening program in January 2008 and is now planning their implementation.

Seniors are encouraged to talk to their doctors about booking an ultrasound now. Early detection and treatment of an abdominal aortic aneurysm can avoid a life-threatening risk of rupture. All men between the ages of 65 and 75 and those under 65 with a family history should be screened. Women over 65 who are at high risk because of a smoking history and a family history should also be screened.

The Canadian Society for Vascular Surgery is dedicated to excellence in the promotion of vascular health for Canadians through education, research, collaboration and advocacy. The Society provides a forum for continuing medical education for vascular surgeons and others interested in the investigation and treatment of patients with vascular disease.

-30-

**For more information or to request an interview, please contact:**

*Cecily Wallace*

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

Ph. 613-260-4180

Cell 613-286-7328

[CWallace@rcpsc.edu](mailto:CWallace@rcpsc.edu)

*Cristiane Doherty*

Delta Media

Ph. 613-233-9191

Cell 613-799-9277

[cristiane@deltamedia.ca](mailto:cristiane@deltamedia.ca)