



November 23, 2005

For Immediate Release

R.I.D.E kicks-off for festive season

York Region Health Services and York Regional Police partner on drug message

NEWMARKET – York Region Health Services will join York Regional Police at the official launch of the 2005 Festive R.I.D.E. (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) program which targets those drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs.

When: Friday, November 25th
10:30am

Where: York Regional Police #2 District
171 Major Mackenzie Drive West, Richmond Hill

Media are invited to join York Regional Police Chief Armand La Barge, Dr. Helena Jaczek Commissioner of York Region Health Services and Medical Officer of Health, the Save-A-Life partners, representatives from Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) York Region chapter and a young person from Youth Speak who will offer a true-to-life perspective about impaired driving.

In addition to the formal kick-off of the Festive R.I.D.E season, the R.I.D.E. launch will showcase the York Region Marijuana and Driving Campaign, a multi-level, six-week partnership campaign that highlights both the health and the enforcement issues around using marijuana and driving.

York Regional Police and York Region Health Services unified resources to address the issue of marijuana and driving, given the continual rise in the use of marijuana, the lack of accurate information in the community and the frequency by which young drivers admit to driving while impaired by marijuana.

In 2004, R.I.D.E reported 35 impaired arrests and 46 drug arrests. To date in 2005, R.I.D.E reports 45 impaired arrests and 60 drug arrests. Under section 253 of the Canadian Criminal Code, one can be charged while impaired by alcohol or other drug.

Recent research reveals that of students (aged 16-19) who drive, 20% are doing so within one hour of using cannabis and 23% have been in a car with a driver who was using cannabis. Marijuana use affects reaction time, concentration, coordination and short term memory. Drivers can be affected by cannabis products when using them or by being in a confined space with others who are, and being exposed to second-hand smoke.

(R.I.D.E. launch continued)

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This campaign represents a small part of the work that York Regional Police and the Health Services Substance Abuse Prevention Program initiate together and separately to address substance use issues in York Region.

A live spot-check will be set up on Major Mackenzie Drive, west of Yonge Street, giving the media an opportunity to see an actual deployment and the York Regional Police state-of-the-art R.I.D.E. truck in action.

For more information about substance use or other health related issues, contact York Region Health Services *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653 or visit www.york.ca

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For more information on the Regional Municipality of York and the services our Region offers, please visit our Web site at: www.york.ca

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