



September 27, 2002
For immediate release

ICLR launches the Natural Disaster Health Research Network

LONDON, ONTARIO – The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR) is launching its Natural Disaster Health Research Network today at a conference being held at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario.

The Natural Disaster Health Research Network, established by ICLR with operating funding from the Climate Change and Health Office, Health Canada, brings together individuals from the climate change, health sciences and disaster management communities to identify strategies for Canadians to successfully cope with the increasing extreme weather events.

"The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction is proud to partner with Health Canada to launch the Natural Disasters Health Research Network," says Paul Kovacs, ICLR's executive director. "Research provides an essential scientific foundation that will allow Canadians to effectively address the growing threat to our health and property due to severe weather."

The goal of the research network is to gain a better understanding of the health and social impacts of natural disasters. ICLR's innovative network will bring together scholars, practitioners and natural disaster management personnel. Together, they will address research gaps in the areas such as mental health, population displacement, the ability of the public health infrastructure to cope with the increase in extreme weather events, and the changing nature of physical injuries and the treatment methods available.

"Canadians will see more storms and increased frequency of floods and droughts in decades to come. Action now, including research, will help make our lives healthier in the future," says Dr. Gordon McBean, ICLR's chair of research.

The current debate over the Kyoto Protocol has Canadian attention focused on the costs of reducing emissions. According to ICLR, the impact of climate change is being overlooked.

Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction
20 Richmond Street East, Suite 210, Toronto, Canada M5C 2W7
Tel: (416) 364-8677 Email: info@iclr.org Fax: (416) 364-5889

"Neglected in this debate are the costs of the impacts of a changing climate on Canadians, their health, their property and their lifestyles," says McBean. "Since Kyoto is only a small step towards reducing global emissions and greenhouse gases, we need to be aware that the climate of Canada fifty years from now will be quite different from the past fifty years."

ICLR's two-day workshop – Dealing with Disasters: Impact on Human Health – is being held at Spencer Hall Conference Centre, 51 Windermere Road, London, Ontario, today and tomorrow (September 27 and 28, 2002).

Established in 1998 by Canada's property and casualty insurers, ICLR is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Toronto and at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. ICLR is a centre of excellence for disaster loss prevention research and education. ICLR's research staff is internationally recognized for pioneering work in a number of fields including wind and seismic engineering, atmospheric sciences, water resources engineering and economics. Multi-disciplined research is a foundation for ICLR's work to build communities more resilient to disasters.

For further information, please contact: Glenn McGillivray, Managing Director, ICLR, tel. 416/364-8677, ext. 3216, fax 416/364-5889, gmcgillivray@iclr.org