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**Canucks Autism Network and MedicAlert collaborate to increase safety for individuals with autism**



**Vancouver, BC** – Canucks Autism Network has collaborated with MedicAlert to create two unique medical ID sports bands for individuals living with autism and supporters of the organization nationwide. With an estimated 1 in 68 children diagnosed with autism, it is currently the fastest growing and most commonly diagnosed neurodevelopmental disorder in Canada. Through MedicAlert's new Canucks Autism Network sports bands, individuals with autism who sign up for MedicAlert will be more identifiable and safer in emergency situations.

MedicAlert's one-of-a-kind *Connect Protect* service gives first responders and healthcare providers direct and secure, 24/7 access to a subscriber's electronic medical profile. For individuals with autism, this can include known routines, anxiety triggers and other conditions that may be relevant in an emergency situation.

Autism is characterized primarily by difficulties with social communication and behaviour. Associated with these challenges, research shows that 49% of children with autism wander or elope from a safe environment. Meanwhile, individuals with autism can also be hesitant or anxious about interacting with first responders or healthcare providers, which can present significant challenges in providing necessary care and attention in emergency situations.

In addition to its collaboration with MedicAlert, Canucks Autism Network delivers autism training to community groups across British Columbia. In 2016, this training was provided to over 500 first responders. By including the new sports bands in its ongoing training, Canucks Autism Network will be able to ensure that first responders province-wide can identify individuals with autism through MedicAlert.

“We are excited to increase safety for individuals with autism nationwide through the Canucks Autism Network MedicAlert ID bracelet,” said Ryan Yao, Manager of Strategic Partnerships at Canucks Autism Network. “First responders are 7 times more likely to interact with a person with autism than the general public. For that reason, it is crucial for individuals involved in emergency care to understand autism and be prepared to respond effectively and safely to situations involving those with autism..” Users who sign up for MedicAlert for \$60/year will receive a one-year subscription to MedicAlert service, Canucks Autism Network MedicAlert ID, free shoe tag, and free registration and shipping. The cost of the sports band is also eligible for reimbursement through provincially-accessible autism funding.

MedicAlert offers a range of exclusive benefits to protect those living with autism:

- 24/7 Emergency Hotline relays key information to first responders within an average of five seconds
- Medical Profile featuring known routines, anxiety triggers, and other conditions accessible by first responders
- Family Notification Service lets loved ones know of the situation and whereabouts of the subscriber during a wandering event

To sign up, call MedicAlert at 1-877-217-7448 from Monday-Friday, 9am-8pm EST (6am-5pm PST).

#### **About the Canucks Autism Network**

The Canucks Autism Network (CAN) provides year-round sports and recreation programs for individuals and families living with autism, while increasing awareness and providing training in communities across British Columbia. To learn more, visit [www.canucksautism.ca](http://www.canucksautism.ca).

#### **For media interviews with Canucks Autism Network, please contact:**

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#### **About MedicAlert Foundation Canada**

MedicAlert Foundation Canada (MAFCA) is the largest membership-based registered charity in Canada and it is the leading provider of emergency medical information services. MedicAlert’s mission is to ensure that all Canadians have access to high-quality health information at time of need, and has protected more than one million Canadians since 1961.

MedicAlert® is backed by robust electronic health records maintained by medically trained professionals, a state-of-the-art secure database, and a 24/7 Emergency Hotline that answers calls from first responder personnel in 140 languages within an average of 5 seconds, all linked to customized identification products for Canadians with medical conditions and special needs. Universally recognized and respected, MedicAlert speaks for you, when you can’t™.

Learn more about MedicAlert, how it works, and how you or a loved one can sign up to a service plan by visiting [medicalert.ca](http://medicalert.ca) or calling 1-877-217-7448.

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