

Canada Lights Up Purple for Global Porphyrria Day

87 Landmarks Across the Country Unite to Raise Awareness for Rare and Often Misunderstood Disease

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- On May 18th, 2026, communities across Canada lit up purple in recognition of Global Porphyrria Day, as 87 landmarks, monuments, bridges, city halls, towers, and legislatures illuminated to raise awareness for porphyria — a group of rare and potentially life-threatening genetic disorders that are often difficult to diagnose.



Saamis Tepee, Medicine Hat

The nationwide awareness campaign was organized by the [Canadian Association for Porphyrria \(CAP\)](#) in collaboration with the Global Porphyrria Advocacy Coalition (GPAC), joining countries around the world in a united effort to bring visibility to patients and families affected by porphyria.

This year's campaign included some of Canada's most recognizable landmarks and attractions, including provincial legislatures in British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, along with major towers, public buildings, bridges, and community landmarks from coast to coast.

Porphyrria affects the body's ability to produce heme, an essential component of hemoglobin. Symptoms can vary widely and may include severe abdominal pain, neurological complications, paralysis, seizures, chronic pain, mental health challenges, and extreme sensitivity to sunlight. Some forms of porphyria can cause painful skin reactions and blistering after even brief sun exposure, leading many patients to feel isolated and misunderstood.

Because porphyria is rare and frequently misdiagnosed, many patients spend years searching for answers before receiving a diagnosis.

For families living with porphyria, seeing their cities and communities illuminated in purple carries deep emotional significance.

“This campaign is about more than lighting up buildings,” said Kelly Burns, Vice-President of the Canadian Association for Porphyria and organizer of Canada’s Light Up for Porphyria campaign. “It is about making people living with rare diseases feel seen, heard, supported, and less alone. Every purple light represents a patient, a caregiver, a family, and a story that deserves recognition.”

The campaign has grown significantly in recent years, connecting patients and advocacy organizations internationally while helping spark conversations about rare disease awareness, earlier diagnosis, access to treatment, and patient support.

Global Porphyria Day is observed annually on May 18th to increase public understanding of porphyria and advocate for improved care and recognition worldwide.

The Canadian Association For Porphyria encouraged Canadians to participate by sharing photos of illuminated landmarks, wearing purple, and using the hashtags:

#PurpleForPorphyria

#GlobalPorphyriaDay

#LightUpForPorphyria

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