



December 12, 2011

ATTN: ParticipACTION Advisory Committees
RE: Active Canada 20/20 Consultation Draft

The Ontario Society of Physical Activity Promoters in Public Health's (OSPAPPH) mission is to elevate physical activity as a public health priority in Ontario through engagement, education, advocacy and strategic alliances. We aim to be the unified voice representing public health practitioners with the mandate of promoting physical activity in our respective communities. This society builds on the strengths of an established infrastructure and mandate within the public health system, as well as the partnerships formed at the community, provincial and national levels, with the ultimate purpose of increasing physical activity levels in Ontario.

In reviewing the Active Canada 20/20 Consultation Draft, OSPAPPH proposes the following recommendations for your consideration:

Vision Statement: OSPAPPH is not certain that 'a physically active lifestyle defines Canada' is the best wording for the vision. The word 'define' is a strong one. We would suggest using different wording such as 'physical activity is a valued part of daily life in Canada'.

Goal Statement: The use of terms such as 'inspire' weakens the goal statement and leaves it sounding vague. As well, the goal statement shouldn't focus solely on individual behaviour, but rather, it should capture the need for collective action and the importance of supportive policy and environments to change behaviour.

Foundations: OSPAPPH agrees with all three of the proposed foundations. With regards to Foundation 2 – Mobilization, changing the name to 'Mobilization and Capacity Building' would perhaps better describe the goal of the foundation.

Pillars: OSPAPPH sees Pillars 1, 3 and 4 as essential, whereas Pillar 2 is considered not as important. In fact, research shows that education as a means for changing behaviour is ineffective when done independently of other strategies such as creating supportive environments or healthy public policies. Therefore, Pillar 2 should include wording that ensures education/awareness campaigns are done only in conjunction with, and to add support to, the other pillars.



With regards to Pillar 4, OSPAPPH would like to see wording to include the preservation and use of natural environments as part of the built environment. This pillar also needs to emphasize the need for safe and adequate infrastructure to support active transportation.

Actions to Support Foundations

Strategic Investments – OSPAPPH agrees with the three proposed actions to support the foundations. With regards to Action 4, OSPAPPH recommends language is added that ensures responsible corporate sponsorship and marketing tactics. Although OSPAPPH recognizes the potential benefit of business and industry investing further in physical activity, this should be done in a manner that does not conflict with other health issues (ie: healthy eating).

Mobilization – OSPAPPH agrees with the proposed actions.

Evidence and Knowledge Exchange – OSPAPPH agrees with Actions 1, 3, and 4 and is neutral about Actions 2 and 5. With regards to Action 2, the main concern lies with the fact that there is existing research documenting the effectiveness of social marketing and education campaigns; thus, the concern is how will this action provide further information? As well, what outcomes will be used to consider whether or not a social marketing or education campaign were effective? Perhaps further detail would help to clarify this action. Action 5 requires clarification as it is unclear what it entails.

Actions to Support Pillars for Change

Policy Development, Change and Implementation – OSPAPPH agrees with all the proposed Actions. Action 2 requires some clarification because it is unclear how workplaces will achieve this and who will be responsible for supporting them.

Targeted Information and Public Education – As previously mentioned, due to the lack of evidence supporting education and awareness campaigns as means for improving behaviour when used in isolation, OSPAPPH disagrees with Actions 1, 2, 3, and 4 as actions on their own. These actions should only be implemented to support the actions under the other pillars. By placing them in their own category, it appears as though decision makers could choose to do these 'low hanging fruit' actions only without investing in the priority areas of policy and supportive environments OSPAPPH agrees with Action 5 and emphasizes the need for government and key decision-makers to have access to current and reliable statistics on the physical activity levels of Canadians. Additionally, information on the impacts of healthy public policy and supportive environments should be provided.



High Quality, Accessible Programs and Services – Overall, OSPAPPH agrees with all of the actions proposed under this pillar. Under Action 4, the statement needs to include ‘utilization of physical education curriculum *and physical education specialists*’. OSPAPPH recognizes that collaboration with and incentives for special interests groups, such as physicians and NCCP, may be required to fulfill the related actions. Finally, Action 9 should ideally be changed to include all employers rather than just large ones.

Community Design and Social Infrastructure – OSPAPPH agrees with each of the actions proposed under this pillar. From a public health perspective, OSPAPPH sees this pillar as a pivotal one in truly supporting and promoting healthy active choices. In order to strengthen Action 2, OSPAPPH recommends that the action include language to capture the importance of the built environment and the need for appropriate cycling and walking infrastructure to support active transportation. As it is currently worded, Action 2 could be interpreted simply as an attempt to influence individual behaviour related to active transportation.

OSPAPPH supports the creation of the Active Canada 20/20 document, believing in the importance of a strategic and coordinated national approach to addressing the physical inactivity crisis. We applaud the Advisory Committees’ dedication to consulting multiple stakeholders and citizens in a variety of settings across Canada.

OSPAPPH welcomes the opportunity to provide further comment as this initiative develops and we look forward to seeing a strong final version of Active 20/20.

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