



To: Cancer Care Ontario/Public Health Ontario

Re: Response to 'Taking Action to Prevent Chronic Disease: Recommendations for a Healthier Ontario' draft

December 21st, 2011

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.

We appreciated the opportunity to participate in the stakeholder consultation at the December 5th Signature Event and are pleased to provide the following comments for your consideration on the physical activity recommendations.

- Overall, OSPAPPH is pleased that PHO, CCO and the Ontario government are starting to focus attention on the burden of chronic disease and appear to have the will to create change. Similar to comments brought forward on December 5th, there are several overarching issues with the document OSPAPPH feels need to be considered:

- 1) Who is taking the lead on this initiative and who is ultimately responsible for ensuring action on the recommendations?
 - 2) The capacity-building and health equity recommendations are not chapters or recommendations on their own – they are foundational approaches to how we need to move the health agenda forward.
 - 3) A priority needs to be placed on securing commitment for a whole-of-government approach to ensure success for most recommendations across topic areas.
 - 4) CCO/PHO need to become more familiar with what work is already happening 'on the ground' in Ontario communities that will support/build the basis for the provincial level risk factor recommendations. This means better communicating with front line public health professionals to determine where there is already local level groundswell of support and prioritizing those recommendations.
 - 5) This needs to be a comprehensive CDP strategy so that government cannot pick and choose the recommendations/risk factor areas it is partial to. Tobacco has received separate provincial funding, but the other risk factors have not had the same infusion of funds, nor comprehensive strategies.
 - 6) Any physical activity recommendations in this provincial document should be aligned with the strategies and actions outlined in the national Active Canada 20/20 document.
-

- Regarding the physical activity recommendations:

- 1) There is a need to prioritize these recommendations based on what is achievable in the shorter term AND what is already happening in communities. Public health units are actively involved with schools, workplaces and municipalities across the province to increase physical activity levels. There is much to be learned about promising practices, tools and policies developed in our communities. Let's build on existing success and strengthen collaboration between the local and provincial levels.
 - 2) Recommendation 9: Physical Education Credit
OSPAPPH supports this recommendation, but recognizes that it is a longer-term goal, requiring changes within the current structure/scheduling of the high schools as well as complete buy-in from the Ministry of Education. We agree with the recommendation from OCGHEPA that physical activity and healthy eating recommendations within the school environment be incorporated into the Foundations for a Healthy School Framework that is already endorsed by the Ministry of Education. This would ensure a more comprehensive approach to physical activity is incorporated into the school environment, including linkages across the curriculum and student travel to and from school (Active & Safe Routes to School). The word 'quality' should be added to this recommendation, indicating the need for quality instruction by skilled physical education instructors.
 - 3) Recommendation 10: Evaluation of Daily Physical Activity
OSPAPPH supports this as a short-term, priority recommendation. This should be implemented primarily at the school level rather than the administration level with the input of teachers, principals and students – those actually implementing the policy.
 - 4) Recommendation 11: Workplace Physical Activity Policy
While OSPAPPH agrees that the government of Ontario should be a role model in workplace health, this is not a priority recommendation to resource. A larger proportion of the population will be impacted by the school and active transportation recommendations; therefore, they should receive the focus and resources of the provincial government. If promotion of workplace health programming/policies is pursued, many public health units have already developed evidence-based tools and resources for workplaces to support employees to be more physically active. The provincial government should use the tools already developed as a basis for their workplace health strategy rather than duplicate efforts.
 - 5) Recommendation 12: Active Transportation
OSPAPPH strongly agrees with this recommendation and suggests it be a priority recommendation. There is already considerable partnership at the community level between public health units and municipalities to incorporate policy language around active community design and active transportation infrastructure into Official Plans, Secondary Plans and development guidelines. Some communities have started making changes to their infrastructure to support active transportation choices. Let's build on this momentum. OSPAPPH recommends that there be more criteria applied to this funding. For example, only municipalities who have policies in place that are supportive of active transportation infrastructure and community design would be eligible to receive the funding. It may also be beneficial to mandate a partnership with public health, and public input in determining priority active transportation
-



infrastructure projects. OSPAPPH agrees with the statement put forward by OCGHEPA that well-connected transit systems can support active transportation, but recommends against financially supporting transit as part of this recommendation. These funds need to be solely dedicated to walking and cycling infrastructure, as they are currently not being adequately funded. This recommendation also ties in nicely with promotion of Active and Safe Routes to School travel planning. Routes to school could be a priority area of focus for active transportation infrastructure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Blueprint and we commend the efforts to date of the Prevention Working Group to prepare evidence-based recommendations on chronic disease prevention. We look forward to reviewing the final recommendations in 2012.

Best Regards,

Lisa Kaldewey

Lisa Kaldewey
OSPAPPH Co-Chair

Chantal L. Lalonde

Chantal L. Lalonde
OSPAPPH Co-Chair
