



April 21, 2011

Dr David Butler-Jones
Chief Public Health Officer
Public Health Agency of Canada
130 Colonnade Road, A.L. 6501H
Ottawa (ON) K1A 0K9

Dear Dr Butler-Jones:

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. OSPAPPH aims to be the unified voice representing public health practitioners in Ontario with the mandate of promoting physical activity in their respective communities. We are writing to express our disappointment surrounding the process undertaken for the release of the new Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines and the lack of resources to support the promotion of the guidelines to the Canadian public.

As front-line physical activity promoters in public health, it is crucial for us to be kept abreast of new information and tools. The Physical Activity Guidelines are the central resource used in our community for planning, education, and advocacy around increasing physical activity. The Guidelines and accompanying information provides physical activity promoters with concrete tools and information to share with the public. Unfortunately, physical activity promoters in public health were given little or no advance preview of the new Physical Activity Guidelines, which left many feeling unprepared to answer questions from colleagues, the public, and the media on the date of release. A more comprehensive release strategy would have included input from public health units and ensured that those working in public health physical activity promotion received the Guidelines and key messages prior to their release to the public and the media.

OSPAPPH is also concerned with the lack of supporting documents and tools made available to accompany the new Guidelines. The old Guides were an excellent resource for educating schools, the community, and other stakeholders on the various types and amounts of physical activity required to achieve health benefits. The previous Guides also provided concrete examples of cardiovascular, muscle and bone strengthening and flexibility activities to ensure understanding of the recommendations. Although we understand the extensive scientific review process that went into the development of the new Guidelines, to the general public they are just that, guidelines. They provide very little practical information for Canadians on how to interpret the guidelines or to motivate Canadians to be active or achieve higher levels of health. Although PHAC created online *Tips to Get Active*, these are not printable and not on the same website as the Guidelines themselves. It appears at this time no one is taking leadership or ownership of the development and distribution of these supporting documents; a role that PHAC has previously had.

In addition, OSPAPPH is very disappointed with the decision of PHAC to no longer provide hard copies of the Physical Activity Guidelines free of charge to public health units. We acknowledge that downloadable copies have been made available on CSEP's website for agencies or those individuals with access to the Internet. Hard copies are still necessary for adequate dissemination of the new Guidelines to all Ontarians. The cost of ordering or printing these in color is expensive and unreasonable, considering that *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* continues to be made available free of charge to all public health units to support healthy eating programs. It is OSPAPPH's position that PHAC support promotion of the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines in an equitable manner and provide hard copies free of charge to any agency or member of the public requesting them.

Finally, it would be extremely beneficial for the Public Health Agency of Canada's logo to be included on the fact sheets and any future supporting educational tools/resources. It is critical that you officially endorse these resources so that the public is aware of the role PHAC has played in the development and endorsement of these new guidelines.

Thank you in advance for your attention to our concerns and we look forward to your response.


Lisa Kaldewey
OSPAPPH Co-Chair


Chantal L. Lalonde
OSPAPPH Co-Chair

cc: Christa Costas-Bradstreet, Relationship Manager, ParticipACTION
Mary Duggan, CAE - Manager, Administration, Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology