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Constituent Societies
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Health Centres

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Ontario Society of Nutrition
Professionals in Public Health

Public Health Research, Education
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Program

Charitable Registration
Number 11924 8771 RR0001

November 6, 2002

**To: Bill Jeffery, L.L.B., Nutrition Coordinator
Centre for Science in the Public Interest**

Dear Mr. Jeffery:

The Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) is an organization of individual members and constituent societies of health professionals working in public and community health. Our mission is to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario. Our constituent society, the Ontario Society for Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH) has recently brought to our attention the proposed bills supporting nutrition and physical activity promotion for which your Centre is trying to obtain support. Our Board and our Executive have considered the proposed bills and have had the opportunity to discuss them in light of OSNPPH's position.

Our association applauds efforts to strengthen legislation that supports people's ability to make informed choices and to make healthy choices the easy choices to make. It shares your concern for the negative impact of food and fitness advertising on people's attitudes and behaviours, especially those directed at children. We also believe that additional funding for programming as well as monitoring is essential to demonstrate an impact of implementing effective strategies to influence eating habits and physical activity practices of Canadians.

We also believe that incremental changes rather than sweeping changes will in the end have the greatest impact. With that in mind we make the following specific recommendations:

1. Amendment to the Competition Act. We support the concept but it might be worth considering picking one target at a time. For example advertising directed at children might be the first target to tackle.
2. Amendment to the Food and Drug Act. We support the nutrition labelling of fresh meat, poultry and seafood at the point of purchase. We would also support the nutrition labelling of fresh produce. However, we do not support the

3. calorie labelling at restaurants. While from a nutrition point of view this might be desirable; in practice, it would negatively impact on the local independent restaurateur. Only chain restaurants with very standardized recipes have the resources to undertake and conditions to support accurate nutrition analysis of their menu. We also feel that in many cases it is the large chains that offer the poorest food choices to consumers.
4. Amendment to the Canada Labour Code, Part II. We support this bill
5. Amendment to the Excise Tax Act. We do not support this bill. This issue needs further exploration
6. Support for a national nutrition and physical activity strategy. We support a national strategy with enhanced funding.

In closing let me state that OPHA requests that if your Centre uses this letter in its efforts, that it be clearly stated that OPHA's support is both specific and conditional.

Please keep us informed as your advocacy plan moves forward.

Sincerely,

Connie Uetrecht,
OPHA President