



**Ontario Public Health Association**

**l'Association pour la santé publique de l'Ontario**

Established/Établi 1949

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**RESOLUTION: # 5**

**Access to a Nutritious Diet for All**

A Resolution adopted by the  
Ontario Public Health Association

*Code:* 2007-05(RES) / *Status:* Active

**RESOLUTION #5: Access to a Nutritious Diet for All**

**WHEREAS** a nutritious diet is a basic requirement for health and well-being; and

**WHEREAS** the most significant barrier to a nutritious diet is inadequate income; and

**WHEREAS** households on social assistance or minimum wage cannot afford a nutritious diet after paying housing costs and other fixed costs; and

**WHEREAS** poor nutrition leads to an increased risk for chronic and infectious diseases, which cost more to treat and manage than to prevent; and

**WHEREAS** ensuring that people have enough funds to purchase an adequate and nutritious diet is an effective disease prevention strategy; and

**WHEREAS** the following Boards of Health have endorsed measures to improve food security including increases in social assistance and minimum wage: Toronto, Thunder Bay, Middlesex-London, Peterborough, Sudbury & District, Niagara, Durham Region; and the Regional Municipality of Waterloo; and

**WHEREAS** the provinces of Quebec and Newfoundland/Labrador and the country of Ireland have already implemented successful poverty reduction strategies.

**THAT** the OPHA request, through the Food Security Workgroup, that the Province develop a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy; and

**THAT** the OPHA request, through the Food Security Workgroup, that the Province do the following:

- i) Establish an independent committee including low-income people, policy experts and advocates to develop rational and just criteria for determining Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates;
- ii) Implement OW and ODSP rates that reflect the real cost of living and are indexed annually to reflect inflation, including the findings of yearly Nutritious Food Basket surveys conducted by local Boards of Health based on protocols established by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long- Term Care; and
- iii) Set the shelter component maximum for OW clients at 85 percent of the median market rent for each local housing market, based on annual surveys conducted by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation; and
- iv) Implement immediately the full Ontario Child Benefit; and
- v) Implement immediately a \$10/hour minimum wage, and that the minimum wage be indexed to keep pace with inflation, and accompanied by a review of the Employment Standards Act to ensure vulnerable workers are protected; and

## Access to a Nutritious Diet for All

**THAT** the OPHA work with organizations which share these goals, such as Dietitians of Canada (DC), the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH), the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa), the Association of Ontario Health Centres (AOHC), and Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO); and

**THAT** a copy of the member approved resolution be forwarded to the Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario; and the Ontario Ministers of Community and Social Services, Finance, Health and Long –Term Care, Children and Youth Services, and Health Promotion; the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Office of Nutrition Policy & Promotion, Health Canada.

### **Implementation Strategy**

The resolution will be implemented by the OPHA Food Security Workgroup (FSWG).

#### Step 1.

Copies of the resolution will be sent to the Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario; and the Ontario Ministers of Community and Social Services, Finance, Health and Long –Term Care, Children and Youth Services, and Health Promotion; the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Office of Nutrition Policy & Promotion, Health Canada.

#### Step 2.

Copies of the resolution will be sent to DC, OSNPPH, alPHa, AOHC and RNAO and the alPHa/COMOH/OPHA social determinants of health work group with a request to work together on advocating for the measures identified in the resolution.

#### Step 3.

Letters will be sent to the appropriate provincial ministries and provincial premier, including signatures from all of the involved organizations. All letters will request a response and an invitation to meet to discuss the proposals further.

#### Step 4.

The FSWG will inform the press of the measures taken and the importance and urgency of the issue.

## Access to a Nutritious Diet for All

### References:

Aslanyan, Garry. Costs of poverty are too great to ignore. Toronto Star. July 19, 2007.

Campaign 2000. A Poverty Reduction Strategy for Ontario: Discussion Paper. July, 2007.  
<http://www.campaign2000.ca/on/index.html?x=105381>

City of Toronto, Board of Health Report “Cost of the Nutritious Food Basket-Toronto 2006”.  
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-896.pdf>

Income Security Advocacy Centre. Election Strategy July, 2007.  
<http://www.incomesecurity.org/campaigns/OntarioElection2007.html>

Toronto Social Services Report “Systems of Survival, Systems of Support: An Action Plan for Social Assistance in the City of Toronto, 2006.”

**Regarding Resolutions, Position Papers, and Motions:**

**Status:** Policy statements (resolutions, position papers, and motions) are categorized as:

**Active, if:**

1. The activities outlined in the policy statement's implementation plan have not yet been completed,
2. The policy statement addresses an issue that is currently relevant to public health in Ontario.

**Archived, if:**

1. The activities outlined in the policy statement's implementation plan have been completed, or
2. The policy statement addresses an issue that is not currently relevant to public health in Ontario or is not based upon the most current evidence. The statement remains the position of the OPHA until a new statement is adopted that effectively reverses or essentially negates all or major elements of an earlier statement. In this instance, the former supercedes the latter.

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