

154 Pearl Street
Suite 201
Toronto, ON M5H 3T4

Mr. Adam Vaughan, MP Spadina-Fort York
280 Spadina Avenue | Unit 307
Toronto | ON | M5T 3A5

Tel: (416) 367-3313
Fax: (416) 367-2844
E-mail: admin@opha.on.ca
www.opha.on.ca

November 18, 2019

President

Karen Ellis-Scharfenberg
E-mail: president@opha.on.ca

Dear Mr. Vaughan,

I am writing you on behalf of the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) to congratulate you and the Liberal Party on your success in the recent federal election and to ask that you work with all members of Parliament to move forward on a national school food program for Canada.

Executive Director

Pegeen Walsh
E-mail: PWalsh@opha.on.ca

The OPHA office is situated within your riding in Toronto's downtown core. We are a member-based charity that has been advancing the public health agenda since 1949. We bring together a broad spectrum of groups and individuals concerned about key public health issues, such as climate change, chronic disease prevention, and healthy food access. The OPHA houses Nutrition Connections, a centre for nutrition knowledge and collaboration.

Constituent Societies

Association of Ontario
Health Centres (AOHC)

The OPHA is one of 105 [members](#) of the Coalition for Healthy School Food, a growing network of health, education, and environmental organizations and school food practitioners from across Canada that are working together to advocate for a national school food program. The Coalition is coordinated by Food Secure Canada.

Association of Public Health
Epidemiologists in Ontario (APHEO)

Association of Supervisors of
Public Health Inspectors of Ontario
(ASPHIO)

The Coalition for Healthy School Food and the OPHA were pleased when the federal government committed to working with provinces and territories to create a national school food program in its [March 2019 budget](#). The Coalition and the OPHA were also pleased to see that a national school food program has support across political parties. The federal [NDP](#) and [Green Party](#) have demonstrated commitment to school-based meal programs, as have Conservative governments in Ontario, Alberta, Quebec, and PEI. Given this support, we see this as an opportunity to work across political parties to support the health of children throughout Canada.

Canadian Institute of Public Health
Inspectors - Ontario Branch (CIPHIO)

Community Health Nurses'
Initiatives Group (RNAO)

Health Promotion Ontario (HPO)

Ontario Association of Public
Health Dentistry (OAPHD)

Ontario Association of Public Health
Nursing Leaders (OAPHNL)

Ontario Dietitians in Public Health
(ODPH)

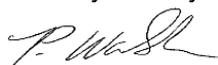
The Coalition is recommending a \$360M annual investment from the federal government for a cost-shared, universal, healthy school food program, as outlined in their [pre-budget consultations written submission](#). It is critical that a national school food program be universal so that all children can access healthy food at school in a non-stigmatizing manner. Canadian research has confirmed that targeted programs with means-testing create stigma, decrease participation rates, and require expensive bureaucratic systems to monitor. It is also important that a national school food program aligns with the healthy eating recommendations of the 2019 Canada's Food Guide so that the program supports the physical and mental health of Canada's next generation.

Ontario Society of Physical Activity
Promoters in Public Health
(OSPAPPH)

The OPHA encourages the federal government to work with provinces and territories to build on school food programs that are already underway. Though many jurisdictions currently offer school-based food programs, investment and support from the federal government would help set national standards, address gaps, support program sustainability, and ensure that all children in Canada have access to healthy food at school. The OPHA also encourages the federal government to work with Indigenous leaders to enable Indigenous control over programs in Indigenous education settings.

If you would like to know more about the OPHA, please contact me at pwalsh@opha.on.ca or 416-367-1281. If you would like more information about the Coalition's activities, please contact Debbie Field at schoolfood@foodsecurecanada.org or 416-537-6856.

Thank you for your consideration.



Pegeen Walsh
Executive Director, Ontario Public Health Association

Encl: Coalition for Healthy School Food's letter to The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau

cc: Debbie Field, Coordinator, Coalition for Healthy School Food
Gisèle Yasmeen, Executive Director, Food Secure Canada

More about the Ontario Public Health Association

OPHA is a member-based, not-for-profit charitable association that has been advancing the public health agenda since 1949. OPHA provides leadership on issues affecting the public's health and strengthens the impact of those who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario. OPHA does this through a variety of means including advocacy, capacity building, research and knowledge exchange. Our membership represents many disciplines from across multiple sectors. OPHA is also home to Nutrition Connections (formerly the Nutrition Resource Centre) which advances nutrition knowledge and collaboration.