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Constituent Societies

ANDSOOHA – Public Health
Nursing Management in Ontario

Association of Ontario
Health Centres

Association of Public Health
Epidemiologists in Ontario

Association of Supervisors of Public
Health Inspectors of Ontario

Canadian Institute of Public
Health Inspectors (Ontario Branch)

Community Health Nurses' Initiatives
Group (RNAO)

Health Promotion Ontario:
Public Health

Ontario Association of Public Health
Dentistry

Ontario Public Health Libraries
Association

Ontario Society of Nutrition
Professionals in Public Health

Public Health Research, Education
and Development (PHRED)
Program

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November 6, 2002

**The Honourable Michael J.L. Kirby
The Senate of Canada**

Dear Senator Kirby:

On behalf of the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) I am writing to you to express our support for the issues that you raised in Chapter Thirteen of your recent report.

The OPHA through its members and constituent societies represents over 3000 individuals working in public and community health throughout Ontario. The key elements of that work include health promotion, disease prevention, health protection and population health strategies aimed at improving the determinants of health for individuals and communities.

Your recognition of the importance of this work is much appreciated. OPHA has been in the forefront in calling for a **shift from a focus on a health care system to one that focuses on a broader health system**. Integral to this shift is the importance of creating healthy public policies that improve the health of communities, rather than policies that address the treatment of illness.

You are quite correct in pointing out that public health and health promotion programs are not adequately funded across Canada. We applaud your recommendation that the Federal government ensure that an additional \$200 million be given to public health in order to sustain public health in fulfilling its proper roles of promoting health, preventing disease and monitoring the health of Canadians. In the words of Charles Hastings, Medical Officer of Health for Toronto from 1910-1929 "Public Health spending is an investment, not an expenditure."

We also applaud you for calling for a National Chronic Disease Prevention Strategy. As you noted in your report, we have known for sometime the clear relationship between chronic diseases and the risk factors of poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking, excessive alcohol and stress. The \$125 million that you ask the government to commit would certainly complement the activities of public health across Canada.

In closing let me again express our appreciation to you for clearly articulating the need for the development of healthy public policies, aimed at preventing disease and promoting health, rather than treating disease. Also, we congratulate you for calling upon the Federal Government to demonstrate leadership through increased financial support to public health and to chronic disease prevention.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jack Lee
Executive Director (Acting)
Ontario Public Health Association