

July 26, 2011

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

The Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century (CCPH21) has the pleasure of forwarding to you, for your information, a letter sent to the Council of the Federation prior to its meeting last week. The CCPH21, created in 2004 following the SARS outbreak, is a network of national non-profit organizations, professional associations, health charities and academic researchers who share the common goal to improve and sustain the health of Canadians. Over the years, it has consistently called for strong federal leadership in public health and investment in our country's public health infrastructure, including public health human resources and population-based programs and initiatives such as the National Immunization Strategy.

The Coalition welcomes the commitment expressed by the federal government for a 6% annual escalator on the Canada Health Transfer. In addition, we commend the federal, provincial and territorial governments for their recognition of the importance of public health through recent declarations and actions both at the policy and programmatic levels. These represent important steps in addressing the many factors that affect the health of Canadians.

In our letter to the Council, the Coalition urged the First Ministers to ensure a prominent place for public health and commit to an investment of resources in essential public health functions (disease and injury prevention, health promotion, health protection, population health assessment, health surveillance and monitoring and pandemic preparedness and response) within a renewed federal, provincial and territorial agreement governing the Canada Health Transfer. Investing in the "upstream" population-based public health functions and strategies, as well as encouraging Canadians to adopt healthy behaviors, represent the key means to improve the health of Canadians, to reduce the burden of disease and disability, and to contribute to the sustainability of the health system in Canada.

Over the next several months, the CCPH21 and several of its member organizations will begin preparing a "case for investing in public health", which we will share with the federal, provincial and territorial governments. Our members would welcome an opportunity to meet with you and the Minister of Health to discuss federal level leadership and investment in public health.

Sincerely



Pamela C. Fralick
Co-Chair, CCPH21
President and CEO, Canadian Healthcare Association



Debra Lynkowski
Co-Chair, CCPH21
CEO, Canadian Public Health Association

Encl.

cc: The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health
Glenda Yates, Deputy Minister, Health Canada
Dr. David Butler-Jones, Chief Public Health Officer, Public Health Agency of Canada