

Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century

September 2, 2004

via fax: 957-5729

Mr. Alex Himelfarb
Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to Cabinet
Office of the Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet
Langevin Block, 80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A3

Dear Mr. Himelfarb,

The Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century is a national network of nearly 40 voluntary organizations, professional associations, and academic and research organizations that are concerned about the future of public health in Canada.

As you are aware, public health issues have had much prominence in Canada in recent years. Infectious diseases such as SARS, West Nile Virus, BSE, Avian influenza and tuberculosis; preventable chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, lung disease and cancer; as well as injuries, have increased the pressures on Canada's health care system. Canadians are concerned about having access to adequate health care now and in the future. Unless something is done soon to improve our prevention, health promotion and health protection efforts, we can expect that these preventable diseases and injuries will continue to exponentially strain our health care resources.


Public health is an integral building block of a sustainable health system. We believe it will be important to address Canada's need for a viable public health system in October's Speech from the Throne. We know that investing in public health today, in order to prevent disease and injury, can reduce existing pressures on our acute care health system, thereby helping to keep Canadians healthy while improving their quality of life and reducing their need for treatment services.

In particular, we believe that the Speech from the Throne should highlight the federal government's commitment to leadership in public health and to a second installment of investments in public health. Specifically, there is a need for:

- long-term, sustainable funding for the national public health agency and for public health across the country;
- a national public health strategy;
- a national public health human resources strategy.

We believe that these investments will provide an umbrella under which common risk factors and health determinants can be integrated. As you provide input into the upcoming Speech from the Throne we strongly encourage you to ensure that adequate funding for public health is a key part of your discussions.

Sincerely,



Elinor Wilson
Chair Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century

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The Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century is a national network of non-profit organizations, professional associations and academic institutions concerned about the state of public health in Canada.

Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century Membership (August 17, 2004)
Association of Canadian Academic HealthCare Organizations
Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health
Canadian Association for School Health
Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry
Canadian Cancer Society
Canadian Dental Association
Canadian College of Health Service Executives
Canadian Dental Hygienists Association
Canadian Diabetes Association
Canadian Healthcare Association
Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Institute of Population and Public Health
Canadian Medical Association
Canadian Nurses Association
Canadian Paediatric Society
Canadian Pharmacists Association
Canadian Psychological Association
Canadian Public Health Association
Canadian Society for International Health
Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada
Community & Hospital Infection Control Association Canada
Dietitians of Canada
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
Institute of Population Health - University of Ottawa
National Specialty Society for Community Medicine
Canadian Animal Health Coalition
Ontario Public Health Association
Safe Kids Canada
The Lung Association
University of Toronto, Department of Public Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine
YMCA of Canada
Susan McBroom, Claire Betker, Regional representatives of public health concerns
Special Advisors – Maureen Law, Jack Lee, Larry Chambers