



Perth District Health Unit

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March 15, 2017

The Honourable Dr. Jane Philpott
Health Canada
70 Colombine Driveway
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, ON I1A 0K9

Jane.Philpott@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Philpott:

Re: Children's Marketing Restrictions, Federal Healthy Eating Strategy & Support for Bill S-228 & Bill C-313

The Perth District Health Unit Board of Health received correspondence from Huron County regarding children's marketing restrictions, the federal Healthy Eating Strategy and support for Bill S-228 and Bill C-313 (attached). Our Board of Health passed a resolution endorsing Huron County's position and is writing this letter to indicate support for the federal government's Healthy Eating Strategy and, in particular, the strategy initiatives that would protect children through restricting the commercial marketing of foods and beverages. In addition, the Board of Health also supports two current private members bills seeking to address this issue: Senator's Green-Raine's Private Member's Bill S-228, which if passed, would prohibit advertisement of food and beverages to children under the age of 13 years; and Peter Julian's Private Members Bill C-313 which focuses on developing a national strategy on advertising to children and amending the *Broadcasting Act*.

The time for action on this issue is now. Food and beverage advertising influences food choices. The majority of food and beverages marketed to children and youth are high in sugar, fat, and sodium. Children are exposed to this marketing repeatedly each day through television, websites, video games, apps and social media. In Canada, the average child watches about two hours of television each day and sees 4-5 food and beverage ads per hour. In Perth County, NutriSTEP surveillance data shows that 40% of children 3-5 years old watch TV while eating and about 65% of children have two or more hours of screen time each day.

Given the screen time of children and youth, their exposure to food and beverage advertising is higher than it has ever been. They are especially vulnerable to advertising because they lack an understanding of the persuasive intent of marketing. The research is clear that the marketing of food and beverages high in sugar, fat and salt to children contributes to the unhealthy eating habits of Canadian youth and the rising risk of nutrition related diseases presenting in this generation. Legislation that restricts food and beverage marketing to this susceptible population is a crucial and proven strategy for improving the eating habits and overall health of children and youth.

The Perth District Health Unit is committed to protecting the health and well-being of our residents. We strongly believe that the implementation of federal marketing restrictions along with the other initiatives outlined in the recently announced Healthy Eating Strategy will help to do this.

Sincerely,

Teresa Barresi
Board Chair

c. alPha
John Nater, MP
Randy Pettapiece, MPP
Huron County Health Unit