

December 13, 2016

The Honourable Dr. Jane Philpott
Health Canada
70 Colombine Driveway, Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, ON N1A 0K9

Dear Minister Philpott,

Re: Bill S-228, *An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibiting food and beverage marketing directed at children)*

At its December 8, 2016 meeting, under Correspondence item b), the Middlesex-London Board of Health voted to endorse the following:

b) Date: 2016 November 04 (Received 2016 November 07)
Topic: Bill S-228, *An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibiting food and beverage marketing directed at children)*
From: Rosana Salvaterra, Medical Officer of Health, Peterborough Public Health
To: Dr. Jane Philpott, Health Canada

Background:

Creating supportive environments for healthy food choices makes the healthier choice the easier choice. Many public health advocacy groups have recommended limitations on marketing that is targeted at children. Peterborough Public Health echoes the recommendations identified by the Healthy Kids Panel and wrote the Federal Minister of Health to support their plan to consider marketing restrictions.

The Board of Health received a report in March 2016 regarding the Impact of Sugar Sweetened Beverage and Creating Supportive Environments. At this meeting the Board of Health endorsed the Heart and Stroke Foundation's position statement that includes a wide range of recommendations one of which is a reduction in marketing to children.

It was moved by Mr. Meyer, seconded by Ms. Vanderheyden *that the Board of Health endorse correspondence item b) Bill S-228, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibiting food and beverage marketing directed at children)*

Carried

The Middlesex-London Board of Health is pleased to support plans to consider marketing restrictions as part of a comprehensive Healthy Eating Strategy.

Sincerely,



Jesse Helmer, Chair
Middlesex-London Board of Health

cc: Bev Shipley, MP, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex
Irene Mathysen, MP, London-Fanshawe
Karen Vecchio, MP, Elgin-Middlesex-London
Kate Young, MP, London West
Peter Fragiskatos, MP, London North Centre
Association of Local Public Health Agencies, Ontario Boards of Health

November 4, 2016

The Honourable Dr. Jane Philpott
Health Canada
70 Colombine Driveway
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9
Jane.Philpott@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Philpott:

Re: Bill S-228, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibiting food and beverage marketing directed at children)

Our board of health passed a motion three years ago (November 13, 2013) supporting marketing restrictions to children. As an Ontario physician, you will remember that in 2012, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care assembled a group of experts from many different sectors and walks of life to advise the government on how best to achieve its goal of reducing childhood obesity. The Healthy Kids Panel's recommendations identified "Changing the Food Environment" as one of the three pillars of a strategy and the restriction of marketing to children was identified as one of the steps. We were happy to see that Ontario was willing to consider taking action, but changes to marketing would be more effective if implemented at the federal level.

Young children cannot distinguish between truth and the claims of advertisement. Young children are still developing their palate and food preferences. Parents often complain that they feel powerless to fend off the food industry's well-funded and well positioned campaign to create a demand for their products. Ontario's schools have policies promoting healthy choices in foods and beverages, but leaving the nutritional protection of children up to schools is too little and too late. Clearly we need to do more to protect vulnerable children from the onslaught of marketing to allow families, schools and community agencies like public health to support these children in making healthy choices.

I am writing on behalf of my board of health, to express our support for your government's plan to consider marketing restrictions, similar to those imposed in Quebec, as part of your recently announced Healthy Eating Strategy. Protecting children from exposure to commercial marketing supports parents to instill healthy habits in their children. Research in this intervention has shown that effective marketing restrictions can prevent a substantial part of childhood obesity and allow children to grow up without the negative influences that powerfully shape food and beverage choices. We understand that national polling has revealed broad population support for interventions that would place limits on the advertising of unhealthy food and beverages to children.

I am also writing to express my gratitude for your government's openness to review Senator Greene-Raine's private member bill, Bill S-228, which, if passed by both Houses, would prohibit the advertisement of foods and beverages to children under the age of 13 years.

Peterborough Public Health is committed to protecting the health and wellbeing of the children who live in our communities. We commend you and your government for having the courage to think and act upstream, in order to create a healthier environment for families to raise these children.

We will eagerly follow the progress of your strategy, and will do everything within our power to support your efforts.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Rosana Salvaterra, MD, MSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

/ag

cc: Maryam Monsef, MP, Peterborough-Kawartha
Kim Rudd, MP, Northumberland-Peterborough South
Jamie Schmale, MP, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health