



Ontario Society of Nutrition
Professionals in Public Health

La société ontarienne des professionnel(le)s
de la nutrition en santé publique

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The mission of OSNPPH is to provide leadership in public health nutrition. It represents its members and promotes their role in improving nutrition and health of people in Ontario

December 18, 2007

Dr. David Butler-Jones
Chief Public Health Officer
Public Health Agency of Canada
130 Colonnade Road
AL 6501H
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9

Re: Canadian Health Network funding

Dear Dr. Jones,

The *Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health* (OSNPPH) would like to submit this letter of support for continuance of funding for the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) *Canadian Health Network* (CHN).

The Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH) is the independent and official voice of registered dietitians (RDs) in public health in Ontario representing over 150 members from all 36 health units in the province. Members of OSNPPH work in local public health units to create healthy eating policies, to develop public health nutrition education programs, and participate in research projects. We are specialists in applied human nutrition, are members of the College of Dietitians of Ontario, and focus on healthy growth and development and chronic disease prevention.

We have learned that the Public Health Agency of Canada informed CHN affiliate organizations on Wednesday, November 7 that the Canadian Health Network has lost its funding and will be phased out by March 31, 2008. Cut backs to grants and contributions were cited as the reason for PHAC decision to dissolve CHN. The CHN web site has become recognized and valued by millions of Canadians as a "go to" place where they know they can find answers to their health questions from a Canadian source they can trust. It is used by almost 400,000 visitors a month, and has a significant Francophone following. As this web site is dismantled, it will leave a significant gap for Canadians

looking for easy online access to trusted information in health promotion and disease prevention.

CHN has demonstrated significant successes. Of special note is the extensive and unique network of over 20 affiliates and hundreds of additional network contributors from non-profit organizations working collaboratively with each other and PHAC. CHN was also a vehicle to profile the expertise and resources of the non-profit sector in Canada.

CHN has been a key component of an integrated strategy for health promotion and disease prevention. OSNPPH is concerned about losing this valuable asset and would ask the Public Health Agency of Canada to reconsider this decision to withdraw funding. Additionally, we would ask the Public Health Agency of Canada to engage CHN partners and other agencies with a similar mandate to strategize on how to best make a sustained commitment to health promotion and chronic disease prevention initiatives for all Canadians.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Tara Brown, MHS, RD
Chair, Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health
www.osnpnh.on.ca

CC:
Hon. Tony Clement, Minister of Health