

[Date]

[Name and title]
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear [Name],

Re.: Physical inactivity crisis in Canada

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Coalition for Active Living, a group of 82 organizations focused on health promotion and disease prevention through healthy living, we call on you – as you head into discussions on government expenditures and health policy this parliamentary session – to support increased funding for the Pan-Canadian Physical Activity Strategy.

Canadians are facing an inactivity crisis; one that can be compared to smoking for its impact on the health system. As a result:

- ¼ of children and ½ of adults are overweight – jeopardizing their life expectancy, their health and their quality of life.
- two million Canadians now suffer from Type II diabetes, a disease entirely preventable through moderate levels of physical activity and adequate nutrition.
- physical inactivity costs the Canadian health care system at least \$2.1 billion annually in direct health care costs. (Alberta Centre for Active Living).

Some work has begun: Issues that touch on this crisis were acknowledged in the Speech from the Throne in October of 2004:

Better health for Canadians requires more than just timely access to health care. It requires the promotion of healthy living, addressing risk factors such as physical inactivity and nutrition.

These issues were reiterated at the First Ministers Meeting in September. Federal, Provincial and Territorial ministers have even set a specific goal to promote health through increasing physical activity by 10% in each province and territory by 2010. And recently, the Standing Committee on Finance indicated its support through a recommendation to develop a public awareness program on health promotion. We applaud these efforts, all of which support our Pan-Canadian Physical Activity Strategy.

Despite these gestures, however, inactivity continues to be a health crisis in Canada. This trend must – and can – be stopped. Action is required. Adopting a healthy lifestyle and incorporating physical activity into our daily lives can be a key component in the fight against preventable chronic diseases. But investment by the federal government is needed to implement the strategy to get Canadians moving again.



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The 'Imagine' brochure, accompanying this letter, is currently being delivered to political leaders at all levels of government. It contains hard hitting facts regarding Canada's inactivity crisis that we hope you will use when persuading others of the need for more funding. In Committee, during Question Period, in correspondence, with the media – all of these are opportunities to use these facts and state your support for a more physically active and healthier Canada.

The Coalition for Active Living would be pleased to assist you in promoting open dialogue on the importance of physical activity in the lives of your constituents and of all Canadians. The time is now; the choice is yours – help us ensure that Canadians get back on track.

Sincerely,



Dr. Rick Bell
Chair
Coalition for Active Living



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