January 25, 2017

VIA EMAIL

The Honourable Jane Philpott  
Minister of Health  
Health Canada  
70 Colombine Driveway, Tunney’s Pasture  
Ottawa, ON  K1A 0K9

Dear Minister Philpott:

Re: Support for the Position of Dietitians of Canada on Taxation and Sugar-Sweetened Beverages as part of a Comprehensive Healthy Eating Approach

The link between high intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and obesity is a significant public health concern.

At its meeting on January 19, 2017, the Sudbury & District Board of Health carried the following resolution #05-17:

WHEREAS obesity results from a complex interaction of many factors including genetic, social and environmental; and

WHEREAS 32% of Canadian children and youth have excess weight or obesity; and

WHEREAS intake of sugar-sweetened beverages is one of the dietary factors leading to increased rates of overweight and obesity; and

WHEREAS children with high intakes of sugar sweetened beverages are 55% more likely to have obesity or excess weight in comparison to those with low intakes; and

WHEREAS available evidence suggests that policy efforts which decrease the consumption of sugar sweetened beverages have the potential to positively impact the health of Canadians; and

WHEREAS the Dietitians of Canada position statement on Taxation and Sugar-Sweetened Beverages identifies sugar-sweetened beverage taxation as a public health intervention with potential positive health impact, especially when combined with further policy efforts; and

WHEREAS Dietitians of Canada recommends that an excise tax of at least 10-20% be applied to sugar sweetened beverages sold in Canada; and
WHEREAS a number of influential Canadian national organizations support a tax on sugar sweetened beverages including the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, the Childhood Obesity Foundation, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada, and the Canadian Diabetes Association;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Sudbury & District Board of Health endorse the Position of Dietitians of Canada on Taxation and Sugar-Sweetened Beverages, and urge the federal government to implement an excise tax on sugar-sweetened beverages; and

FURTHER THAT copies of this motion be shared with key provincial and national stakeholders.

Taxation of sugar-sweetened beverages is a promising measure to decrease consumption, save health care dollars, and generate revenue that could be used to fund other obesity prevention interventions.

Evidence demonstrates that high income countries that have implemented taxation on sugar-sweetened beverages have seen decreases in consumption and improvements in body mass index.

Thank you for your consideration of this public health policy intervention as a means to improve the food environment and work toward making the healthy choice, the easy choice, for all Canadians.

Sincerely,

Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario
The Honourable Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long Term Care
Ms. Roselle Martino, Assistant Deputy Minister, Population and Public Health Division
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Mr. Marc Serré, MP, Nickel Belt
Mr. Paul Lefebvre, MP, Sudbury
Mr. Carol Hughes, MP, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing
Mr. Glenn Thibeault, MPP, Sudbury
Ms. France Gélinas, MPP, Nickel Belt
Mr. Michael Mantha, MPP, Algoma-Manitoulin
Ms. Linda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health
Ms. Marsha Sharp, Chief Executive Officer, Dietitians of Canada