

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq
Minister, Health Canada
Brooke Claxton Building, Tunney's Pasture
Postal Locator: 0906C
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

August 17, 2011

Dear Minister Aglukkaq,

Re. alPHa Resolution A11-10, Regulation and Reduction of Sodium in the Canadian Food Supply

On behalf of member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) I am writing to introduce alPHa's 2011 Resolution calling for action on reducing sodium in the Canadian food supply.

As you are aware, The Sodium Working Group - which included members from government, the food industry, university scientists, and health advocates – developed a *Sodium Reduction Strategy for Canada*, which was released in July 2010. The recommendations were based on strong evidence that unnecessarily high levels of sodium in many of our prepared and manufactured foods is contributing to the fact that the average Canadian consumes more than double the daily recommended amount of dietary salt, which in turn greatly increases his or her risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

Because most of the salt Canadians consume is “hidden” in packaged, prepared and processed foods, it is very difficult to keep track of how much we eat each day. It is for this reason that awareness must be increased, that the food industry be more judicious about the amount added to its products, and that government engage in the development of public policy that includes clearer guidelines and regulation where appropriate.

The Sodium Working Group found that reducing average sodium intake by about 1,800 mg per day would result in direct health care savings of \$1.38 billion per year, with an additional indirect savings of \$1.61 billion. We believe that acting on the six recommendations in the attached Resolution will contribute to reducing the unnecessarily high levels of sodium in our food supply, thereby reducing the unnecessarily high costs to the Canadian health care system and economy.

We look forward to congratulating the Government of Canada for acting on these recommendations.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Linda Stewart,
Executive Director

Copy: Dr. David Butler-Jones, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada
Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health (Ontario)
Hon. Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion (Ontario)
Hon. Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Ontario)

Encl.

TITLE: Regulation and Reduction of Sodium in the Canadian Food Supply

SPONSOR: Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit

WHEREAS the *Sodium Reduction Strategy for Canada* released in July 2010 by the Sodium Working Group recommends that:

- a) Health Canada continues to work with the food industry to establish voluntary sodium reduction targets by food category.
- b) Health Canada, in collaboration with the Provinces and Territories, continue to work with the restaurant and food service industries to establish voluntary sodium reduction targets for meals and menu items sold in restaurants and food services establishments.
- c) manufacturers lower the sodium content of their products to meet the voluntary targets and go beyond those targets over time to the lowest level possible, taking into consideration microbial food safety, quality and consumer acceptance.
- d) a mechanism be established on Health Canada's sodium website that would allow individual companies to commit to the Sodium Reduction Strategy.
- e) the *Food and Drug Regulations* be amended to change the basis of the Daily Value (DV) for sodium in the Nutrition Facts Table (NFT) from 2,400 mg to 1,500 mg to reflect the Adequate Intake (AI) level.
- f) the federal government, together with provincial and territorial governments, develop more consistent sodium guidelines and procurement policies for use by food service operations in publicly-funded institutions such as schools, daycares, hospitals, care facilities, correctional institutions and for the armed forces.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Local Public Health Agencies encourage the federal Minister of Health, the Chief Public Health Officer for Canada, Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario to support and implement the aforementioned recommendations outlined in the 2010 Report of the former Federal Sodium Reduction Working Group.

ACTION FROM CONFERENCE: Resolution **CARRIED**