

# OPEN LETTER

October 24, 2018

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, PC, MP  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON, Canada K1A 0A6  
Sent by email: Justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

## Subject: Federal Government Healthy Eating Strategy

Dear Prime Minister,

We, as a group of health organizations, health charities and health professional associations concerned about the millions of Canadians affected by diet-related disease are writing to express our appreciation for your government's work on the federal Healthy Eating Strategy and to urge you and your cabinet colleagues to complete this commitment before the end of your government's term.

The Healthy Eating Strategy includes the recently implemented measure to remove heart-clogging trans fats from our food supply - we congratulate your government for implementing this critical measure. Importantly, the Healthy Eating Strategy also includes the forthcoming revision of Canada's Food Guide, restrictions on unhealthy food and beverage marketing to children and front-of-package (FOP) nutrition labelling.

### WHY IS THE HEALTHY EATING STRATEGY NECESSARY?

- The cost of diet-related disease in Canada was \$26 billion in 2015.
- Purchases of ready-to-consume, highly processed foods have doubled in Canada over the past several decades, from 30 to 60% of the family food budget.
- Half the calories consumed by Canadians come from highly processed foods.
- Children are bombarded on TV and online with marketing for unhealthy foods and beverages.

This strategy will do much to help people living in Canada to eat healthy, reduce the incidence of diet-related disease/illness and consequently provide savings to the healthcare system and the economy.

In particular, simple, clearly visible and easy to understand front-of-package nutrition labelling (FOP) is important to ensure consumers can quickly grasp nutrition information and to support them to make healthier choices. Consumers strongly support this measure; 87% of people living in Canada agree that health alert symbols for sugar, sodium and saturated fats on the front of packaged food would be helpful when grocery shopping (Pollara Strategic Insights, August 2018).

Prime Minister, congratulations to you and your colleagues for your work on these mandate commitments. We are here to support you in completing this strategy before the end of your government's current term.

Sincerely,

Lynne Hudson  
CEO  
Canadian Cancer  
Society

Dr. F. Gigi Osler  
President  
Canadian Medical  
Association

Elizabeth Holmes  
Chair  
Chronic Disease  
Prevention  
Alliance of Canada

Dr. Jan Hux  
President and  
CEO  
Diabetes Canada

Nathalie Savoie  
CEO  
Dietitians of  
Canada

Yves Savoie  
CEO  
Heart & Stroke