



Canadian Cancer Society
Société canadienne
du cancer

MPP Daryl Kramp
Room 269
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A8

Friday, November 27, 2020

Dear MPP Kramp,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) in support of Bill 216, *Food Literacy for Students Act*, in conjunction with the Food Policy Council for Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington and other education, health, agriculture, and community-food security organizations. Learning how to grow and prepare healthy food is fundamental to one's long-term health and well-being. Evidence suggests that, while it is never too late to start, healthy eating habits developed during early childhood are more likely to be sustained into adolescence and adulthood, and are associated with reduced risks of chronic diseases, including cancer and obesity, later in life.

According to the CCS-funded Canadian Population Attributable Risk of Cancer (ComPARE) study, about 25,300 cancer cases diagnosed in 2015 alone in Ontario were due to key modifiable risk factors. Initiatives such as Bill 216 could address a number of these modifiable risk factors, including low fruit and low vegetable diets, excess weight, and sedentary behaviour. For instance, if everyone in Ontario increased their fruit intake by two servings per day, by 2038, on a cumulative basis, we could prevent about 41,700 cancer cases. Similarly, if everyone in Ontario increase their vegetable intake by one serving per day, we could prevent about 15,400 cancer cases¹. For more information on the ComPARE study and its findings, please go to <http://prevent.cancer.ca>.

A preventative food literacy curriculum that equips students with the skills and the knowledge they need to make healthy food choices for life will not only spare some Ontarians and their loved ones from having to hear the words "you have cancer", but it will also lead to significant health care savings. Research estimates that poor diets lead to an economic burden of tens of billions of dollars each year in Canada². We see success with this Bill coming from the allocation of sufficient funding to support the work of educators and the curriculum, but we feel the value of the investment in prevention of cancer and other chronic diseases would be well worth it.

¹ Please note the data for these interventions are mutual exclusive and the numbers cannot be added between intervention scenarios

² Lieffers, Jessica R L et al. "The economic burden of not meeting food recommendations in Canada: The cost of doing nothing." *PloS one* vol. 13,4 e0196333. 27 Apr. 2018, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0196333



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Should you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter or CCS support of this Bill, please contact Daniel Nowoselski, Senior Advocacy Coordinator, at daniel.nowoselski@cancer.ca or 647-562-5929.

Best regards,

Helena Sonea
Senior Manager, Advocacy

Cc: Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
Hon. Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Government and Consumer Services
Members of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly:
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Vijay Thanigasalam, MPP, Scarborough-Rouge Park
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