



**Federal Pre-Budget Submission
The Standing Committee on Finance**

August 12, 2011

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Executive Summary

Inactivity and obesity have reached alarming levels in Canada and cost the Canadian economy upwards of \$7.1 billion annually¹.

There is a broad political consensus of the need to achieve healthcare cost savings and improve productivity through disease prevention and the promotion of healthy living. The Government of Canada has demonstrated a commitment to the promotion of physical activity and sport participation through fitness tax credits, recreational infrastructure funding and support for ParticipACTION.

A sustained partnership between the Government of Canada and ParticipACTION is critical to Canada's economic and social prosperity.

Effective investments in healthy living and disease prevention carry the promise of cost savings and a more prosperous future. Effective health promotion measures are those with a history of proven results. These investments should leverage private sector funding and community partnerships and be both measurable and accountable—attributes at the heart of ParticipACTION's mandate.

In the 2010-2011 fiscal year, Sport Canada's strategic investment of \$4.5 million helped ParticipACTION leverage \$1.35 million in private sector sponsorship and more than \$30 million in-kind contributions.

ParticipACTION has delivered an excellent return on the Government of Canada's investment using its trusted brand and recognized legacy to reach millions of Canadians with behaviour-changing communications and capacity building partnerships with thousands of local organizations. ParticipACTION is ideally positioned to continue to deliver health promotion and disease prevention programming and leverage additional private sector and community partnerships to maximize Canada's investment.

Recommendation

- **Given ParticipACTION's excellent return on investment and focus on positive health outcomes, it is recommended that the Government of Canada commit to an investment of \$5 million in annual federal funding to ParticipACTION.**

WHO IS PARTICIPACTION?

As the national voice of physical activity and sport participation, ParticipACTION's work in Communications, Capacity Building and Knowledge Exchange contributes to the areas identified by the Global Advocacy for Physical Activity Council. Originally established in 1971, ParticipACTION was created in order to address the low physical activity levels of Canadians. For almost 30 years, ParticipACTION, through both government and corporate funding, raised the issue of physical activity and sport participation. A 1982 national survey showed increases in physical activity participation rates between 1971 and 1982. The Canada Fitness Surveys also showed increases in national levels of physical activity between 1981 and 1988, and again between 1988 and 1995. ParticipACTION was, and remains today, a Canadian icon, with 80% brand recognition among all Canadians. It has 88% brand recognition among Canadians between 35 and 54 years of age².

¹ Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information. [Obesity in Canada](#). 2011

² Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (2010). ParticipACTION Brand Recognition Report.

A Cost-Effective Solution

In 2007, ParticipACTION was reinvigorated with this government's support. ParticipACTION encourages Canadians to improve their health and quality of lives through physical activity and sport participation. ParticipACTION partners with media, business, labour, education, volunteer organizations, and physical activity and sport groups, and supports the efforts of national and provincial / territorial governments in building momentum towards a more active and healthy Canada.

In the 2010-2011 fiscal year, Sport Canada's strategic investment of \$4.5 million helped ParticipACTION leverage \$1.35 million in private sector sponsorship and more than \$30 million in-kind contributions. This represents a continuation of ParticipACTION's 7:1 ratio of private sector dollars raised to public sector investment.

Making a Difference

Further, according to recent surveys, stakeholders and Canadians at large support ParticipACTION and the work it is doing to get Canada to be an active nation. According to recent surveys 96.3% of NGO stakeholders agreed that ParticipACTION is positively contributing to the sector³.

- **Among Canadians, 80% believe ParticipACTION is providing national leadership to move people to move more, 76% agree that ParticipACTION is the best organization to represent the importance of physical activity, and 74% agree that ParticipACTION is making a difference⁴.**

THE INACTIVITY CRISIS

Canadians are facing an inactivity crisis that, left untended, will have a destructive impact on our health, our economy and our society in general. Fewer than half of all Canadians are as active as they need to be. According to recent Canadian surveys, only an average of 7% of young people attain the recommended level of 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day, with 9% of boys and 4% girls engaging in the recommended 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity on at least 6 days per week⁵.

Further, fewer Canadian youth aged 15-18 are participating in sport, with overall participation rates declining from 77% to 59% since 1992⁶. At the same time, chronic disease has been on the rise. Some conditions previously thought to be restricted to older adults—like high blood pressure, heart disease and Type 2 diabetes—are showing up in the young.

The link between physical activity and physical health is certain. The less we move, the more likely we are to become sick and to shorten our life expectancies. In fact, physical inactivity is the fourth leading cause of chronic disease mortality, contributing to over 3 million preventable deaths annually worldwide.

THE COSTS OF AN INACTIVE NATION

A recent report entitled *Obesity in Canada* prepared by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information confirms that physical inactivity is the greatest predictor of

³ ParticipACTION (2010). Partner Surveys Results.

⁴ Angus Reid Public Opinion (2011). ParticipACTION Assessment Report.

⁵ Colley, R.C., Garriguet, D., Janssen, I., Craig, C.L., Clarke, J., & Tremblay, M.S. (2011). Physical activity of Canadian Children and Youth: Accelerometer data from the 2007-2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey. *Statistics Canada, Health Reports*, 22 (1), Catalogue no. 82-003-XPE.

⁶ Ifedi, F. (2008). Sport participation in Canada, 2005. *Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics*. Vol. Catalogue no. 81-595-MIE - No. 060: Statistics Canada.

obesity. In the past 30 years, the percentage of obese adults in the population has doubled while the prevalence of obesity in children and youth tripled between 1979 and 2008.

- **Obesity costs the Canadian economy between \$4.6-billion and \$7.1-billion a year in terms of direct health-care costs and indirect costs such as lost productivity in the workforce⁷.**

Physical inactivity imposes substantial social costs in the form of increased hospital stays and increased use of physician and nurse services. Compared to an active person, an inactive person will spend 38% more days in hospital, use 5.5% more family physician visits, use 13% more specialist services, and use 12% more nurse visits. On an annual basis, the additional use of healthcare associated with physical inactivity results in approximately: 2.37 million family physician visits, 1.33 million other physician visits, 0.47 million nurse visits, and 1.42 million hospital stays.

- **According to the Conference Board of Canada in 2010, we could save \$76 billion over the next ten years by tackling the five main risk factors for heart disease: smoking, physical inactivity, obesity, high blood pressure and lack of fruit and vegetable consumption⁸.**

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO SOLVE THE INACTIVITY CRISIS?

In 2011, the Toronto Charter for Physical Activity was developed with extensive worldwide consultation. In support of the Toronto Charter, the Global Advocacy for Physical Activity Council, along with leading academics and practitioners, identified the seven best investments for physical activity, which require action at all three levels of government⁹. Three of these investments, in particular, are effectively delivered and measured through a sustained partnership between the Government of Canada and ParticipACTION:

- ***Public education including mass media to raise awareness and change social norms on physical activity***

Mass media provide an effective way to transmit consistent and clear messages about physical activity to large populations. Both paid and non-paid forms of media can be used to raise awareness, increase knowledge, shift community norms and values and motivate the population to be more active. Combinations of approaches, supported by community-based events and community engagement and which are sustained over time, are most effective in building health literacy and changing community values.

- ***Community wide programs involving multiple sectors and settings and that mobilize and integrate community engagement and resources***

Whole-of-community approaches to physical activity across the life course will be more successful than a single program to increase population levels of physical activity. Whole-of-community approaches where people live, work and recreate have the opportunity to mobilize large numbers of people.

- ***Sport systems and programs that promote sport for all and encourage participation across the lifespan***

⁷ Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information. [Obesity in Canada](#). 2011

⁸ Sari Naszmi. 2009. The impact of physical inactivity on the Canadian health care. Research Update (a publication by the Alberta Centre for Active Living). Vol 16, #3.

⁹ Global Advocacy for Physical Activity (GAPA) the Advocacy Council of the International Society for Physical Activity and Health (ISPAH). *NCD Prevention: Investments that Work for Physical Activity*. February 2011. Available from: www.globalpa.org.uk/investmentsthatwork

Increased participation in physical activity can be encouraged through implementation of sport participation programs and policies. Organizations can promote physical activity through supportive policies and programs that reduce social and financial barriers to access and participation, and increase motivation to be involved, including in individuals with mental or physical disabilities.

WHAT IS PARTICIPACTION'S ROLE?

Through its communications and social marketing campaigns, ParticipACTION uses mass media to raise awareness and change social norms on physical activity. Studies indicate that mass media communication campaigns can influence awareness of the physical inactivity issue and bring about long-term behavior change¹⁰.

- **ParticipACTION's social marketing campaigns have been proven effective. An evaluation of ParticipACTION's most recent campaign confirmed that 82%(E)/71%(F) of the target audience recalled the campaign messages and 70%(E) /52% (F) of the target audience took action as a result of seeing the campaign¹¹.**

Through its capacity building initiatives and partnerships with other physical activity, sport and recreation organizations, ParticipACTION is able to support community-wide programs that mobilize and integrate community engagement and resources. ParticipACTION brings value to the sport and physical activity sectors by assisting organizations to further their mandates through the development and coordination of initiatives such as the following:

Sports Day in Canada

ParticipACTION, in partnership with True Sport and CBC Sports, managed the implementation of the first-ever Sports Day in Canada (SDIC), a national celebration of sport, from grassroots to high-performance levels, in 400 communities across the country. Over 35 different sports were profiled, 1000 organizations hosted events in every province and territory, 1.28 million Canadians participated in or attended an event, and 58.7 million media impressions were generated. Survey results confirmed that the initiative resulted in increased registration and participation in sport programs (26.5%), increased awareness of sport organizations and programs (46%), and increased local media attention for events (23%).

- **Among participants involved in Sports Day in Canada, 43% said it increased their intention to become more healthy and active, and 34% of Canadians said it increased their intention to participate in sports. Ninety percent of event organizers stated they would register for Sports Day next year and 87% would recommend participating in Sports Day to another organization.**

Sogo Active

Sogo Active is a "for youth by youth" initiative designed to encourage increased participation in sport and physical activity through national challenges and challenges issued by youth. A national partnership with Coca-Cola Canada that is supported by 13 provincial and territorial sport and recreation organizations, Sogo Active has registered over 25,000 youth (aged 13-19), is in 1,000 communities across the country and has recruited over 1800 community sport and recreation organizations. Since the program's inception, \$1.6

¹⁰ Cavill et al., 2004. Changing the way people think about health-enhancing physical activity: Do mass media campaigns have a role? *J Sports Sciences*, 22, 771-790.

¹¹ Angus Reid (2011). ParticipACTION Campaign Assessment.

million dollars of private sector funds have been deployed to provincial / territorial and local sport, recreation and other youth-serving organizations to support access to sport and physical activity opportunities for Canada's youth.

The Partnership Protocol

Working with a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the public, private, not-for-profit sectors and researchers, ParticipACTION oversaw the development of The Partnership Protocol, a resource that was created to assist not-for-profit organizations in the fields of sport and physical activity to find, implement and sustain responsible, effective partnerships with the private sector, while simultaneously supporting individual missions and mandates. A consultation with 30 experts and organizations provided input and guidance to the content and format of The Protocol. The Partnership Protocol has been presented to over 300 organizations at conferences and forums and distributed through the networks of partner organizations. Publication of The Partnership Protocol as a chapter in a Sponsorship Marketing textbook is forthcoming.

Active Canada 20/20

To be launched in 2012, Active Canada 20/20, A Physical Activity Strategy and Change Agenda for Canada, is the response to an urgent national need to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary living. Active Canada 20/20 provides a clear vision and a change agenda to describe what Canada must do to increase physical activity, reduce sedentary behaviour, thereby reducing risk and achieving the many benefits of a society that is active and healthy. It demonstrates the actions that we must take to strengthen Canada, by making physical activity an important cultural trademark. Active Canada 20/20 can impact every family in Canada. It is designed to engage decision makers and rally the collaborative, coordinated and consistent efforts of all stakeholders at every level to make a difference for the well being and sustainability of our communities, our country, our social programs and, most importantly, our people. Active Canada 20/20 is another example of ParticipACTION providing leadership for an initiative that requires collaboration from all members of the physical activity sector.

WHY SUPPORT PARTICIPACTION?

ParticipACTION plays a unique role in the physical activity, sport, and recreation sectors. With its broad perspective and mandate, it has the ability to reach out to and bridge the gaps between a number of traditional and non-traditional partners. Rather than competing with other organizations, ParticipACTION is uniquely positioned to knit together organizations and help them do what they do better. It is able to provide knowledge and information on a range of topics; work in partnership with sector experts to reach into a number of settings including schools, workplaces, communities, healthcare institutions, etc.; inform Canadians through the media of the benefits of sport participation and physical activity and tie the benefits to the broader health issues; and leverage funding through ParticipACTION's well-known and iconic Canadian brand.

ParticipACTION is a proven vehicle for delivering Canada's health promotion and disease prevention investment. In order to continue to attract additional investment to the sector through private sector partnerships, ParticipACTION must be able to count on the Government of Canada as its partner. It is only through partnerships that ParticipACTION can play a role in realizing the collective vision of a healthier, more active Canada.