

Hon. Kathleen Wynne  
Minister of Education  
Mowat Block,  
900 Bay Street,  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Jan 07 2008

Honourable Minister,

**Re. Healthy Food for Healthy Schools**

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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 today to communicate alPHa's support for Bill 8, the Healthy Food for Healthy Schools Act.

Healthy growth and development is strongly dependent on proper nutrition, and the school is an ideal environment to provide supports for it. We would like to commend you for introducing this bill, as it demonstrates a commitment to improving the health of Ontario's children, by instilling healthy eating habits that will carry on into adulthood.

We appreciate that this initiative is a small part of a comprehensive strategy to make schools more conducive to health by increasing physical activity and limiting the availability of calorie-dense, nutrient poor options in their cafeterias and vending machines. We also appreciate that this Act will enable further improvements to nutritional standards in the school environment.

Trans fat is but one of a range of food-related risks to health, but there is strong evidence that it is a significant one. In *TRANSforming the Food Supply*, the final report of the Trans Fat Task Force, co-chaired by Health Canada and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, the case is clearly made for severely limiting the trans fat content in all foods, due to strong associations with coronary heart disease. alPHa has passed a Resolution urging the federal government to implement the recommendations contained in this report, and is attached for your information.

The Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health, an alPHa Affiliate, has already communicated its support for this bill. With their expertise, we look forward to working with you as you move forward with the development of further policies, guidelines and regulations that will govern nutritional standards in the school environment.

Yours truly,

Linda Stewart,  
Executive Director

**Copy:** Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health (ACTING)  
Hon. Tony Clement, Minister of Health (CAN).

**Encl.**

## **alPHa RESOLUTION A07-2**

**TITLE:** **Childhood Obesity and Trans Fats**

**SPONSOR:** **Durham Regional Council**

**WHEREAS** from 1978 to 2004, overweight/obesity rates doubled from 13% to 26% for children aged 6 to 11 years and from 14% to 29% for adolescents aged 12 to 17 years; and

**WHEREAS** 55% of First Nations children and 41% of Aboriginal children and adolescents living off-reserve are either overweight or obese; and

**WHEREAS** there is a major gap between the reality and the perception of Canadian parents about the weight of their children; and

**WHEREAS** as the overweight children of today become tomorrow's obese adults, the burden on the health care and social systems is expected to increase; and

**WHEREAS** obesity costs Canada about \$1.6 billion annually in direct health care costs, or 2.4% of total health care spending; and

**WHEREAS** obesity costs Canada about \$2.7 billion in indirect costs including lost productivity, disability insurance, reduced quality of life and mental health problems due to stigmatization and poor self-esteem; and

**WHEREAS** the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health has studied this matter and released its report and recommendations "*Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids*" in March 2007; and

**WHEREAS** Health Canada's multi-stakeholder Trans Fat Task Force studied the trans fat component of Canada's obesity epidemic and released its report and recommendations in June 2006;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** alPHa urges the Government of Canada to respond to "*Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids*" and the Trans Fat Task Force reports and implement their recommendations as quickly as possible.