

Confirmation of Support/Endorsement for
Dietitians of Canada Position Statement and Recommendations
Addressing Household Food Insecurity in Canada

Dietitians of Canada is pleased to share with your organization, the enclosed three documents – Executive Statement, Background, and Position and Recommendations – regarding our views about the situation of household food insecurity in Canada. We invite you to review the enclosed documents, which are under embargo and will not be available for public distribution until August 2016. Should your organization wish to support or endorse **the Position Statement and Recommendations of Dietitians of Canada, as outlined below**, please use this form to provide details of your confirmation. **Please respond by August 15, 2016 if possible.**

POSITION STATEMENT:

Household food insecurity is a serious public health issue with profound effects on physical and mental health and social well-being. All households in Canada must have sufficient income for secure access to nutritious food, after paying for other basic necessities.

Given the alarming prevalence, severity and impact of household food insecurity in Canada, it is essential that a pan-Canadian, government-led strategy be put in place to specifically reduce food insecurity at the household level, including policies that address the unique challenges of Indigenous Peoples.

Regular monitoring of the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity across all of Canada is required. Research must continue to address gaps in knowledge about household vulnerability to food insecurity and to evaluate the impact of policies developed to eliminate household food insecurity in Canada.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Development and implementation of a pan-Canadian government-led strategy that includes coordinated policies and programs, to ensure all households have consistent and sufficient income to be able to pay for basic needs, including food. The strategy should consider:

- sufficient income protection for low income households relying on precarious employment and low wages
- improved benefits for households with children under 18 years, especially households led by a lone parent
- improved benefits for low income, unattached individuals
- increased social assistance and disability pension rates to ensure individuals and their households have enough income to pay for basic needs, including food
- investigation of the feasibility of a guaranteed annual income that ensures all vulnerable households can have access to sufficient income assistance to meet basic needs
- more investment in subsidized, affordable and stable housing options, including the provision of housing for individuals/households who are homeless
- financial assistance that equitably addresses the higher cost of food in remote and northern regions of Canada, whether through Nutrition North Canada or other programs.

2. Implementation of a federally-supported strategy to comprehensively address the additional and unique challenges related to household food insecurity among Indigenous Peoples, including:

- commitment to reconciliation (as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), including assurance of household food security and food sovereignty
- fair resolution of disputes over access to lands and resources recognized by Indigenous and Treaty rights, to ensure food sovereignty and access to traditional/country foods by Indigenous Peoples
- sufficient supports to remove barriers for Indigenous Peoples who are hunting, fishing or gathering/cultivating traditional/country foods
- improved access to and ability to afford healthy store-bought or market foods in all First Nation reserves and northern and remote communities where food prices are substantially higher than elsewhere in Canada, with equitable community eligibility for Nutrition North Canada subsidies and/or other programs to address household food insecurity among Indigenous Peoples
- sufficient supports to improve opportunities in education and employment, for equitable income adequacy and security among Indigenous Peoples compared to other groups within Canada.

3. Commitment to mandatory, annual monitoring and reporting of the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity in each province and territory across Canada, including among vulnerable populations. Measurement of household food insecurity must be included in impact/outcome evaluation of strategies to reduce poverty and household food insecurity. Features of data collection and reporting should include:

- mandatory annual data collection using a standardized tool such as the HFSSM, with sufficient sampling to measure the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity

in vulnerable populations across all regions of Canada; some longitudinal studies would provide valuable information, in addition to cross-sectional surveillance.

- regular analysis and public reporting of household food insecurity in Canada, with comprehensive detail by geographic regions and vulnerable populations, using a framework for household food insecurity categories that includes marginal food insecurity as part of the total of food insecurity and identifies severity of household food insecurity at the levels of marginal, moderate and severe food insecurity. Data analysis and reporting should be coordinated to maximize capacity to compare data from all studies.
- regular evaluation of the impact of poverty reduction and other strategies to reduce household food insecurity (measured by the HFSSM) and improve selected population health indicators, with adjustments in policy to maximize reach and impact. For example, the effectiveness of government subsidy of food prices in Nutrition North Canada communities should be monitored and adjusted to ensure reduction of the alarmingly high rates of household food insecurity in these regions.
- protocols for screening within in the health care system to identify household food insecurity and poverty (as well as malnutrition) among individual health system users.

4. Support for continued research to address gaps in knowledge about populations experiencing greater prevalence and severity of household food insecurity and to inform the implementation and evaluation of strategies and policies that will eliminate household food insecurity in Canada. Research is needed on topics such as:

- factors contributing to increased vulnerability amongst populations experiencing disproportionately more food insecurity within their households
 - the costs and benefits of different policy responses such as basic income guarantee and other income-based strategies, including social, political and healthcare costs
 - outcome evaluation following implementation of public policy and poverty reduction strategies in Canada, especially the measured impacts on household food insecurity and health of individuals within the population.
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The following organization supports' this position statement and the recommendations from Dietitians of Canada, Addressing Household Food Insecurity in Canada (2016).

Name of organization: Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada (CDPAC)

Name of organization representative: Craig Larsen

Title: Executive Director

Email and Telephone for contact: clarsen@cdpac.ca (613) 852-2504

We authorize Dietitians of Canada to acknowledge our support of the Position Statement and Recommendations with publication of Household Food Insecurity documents, as follows:

“Reviewed and Supported by [organization’s name]”

“Reviewed and Endorsed by CDPAC”

“[alternate statement of support, as specified by your organization]” as per below:

No thank you. Our organization does not authorize Dietitians of Canada to acknowledge our organization’s name in the publication of the final documents.



Signature:

Date: August 15, 2016

Please return this form to: pat.vanderkooy@dietitians.ca

By mail: Dietitians of Canada, 480 University Ave, Suite 604, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5G 1V2

We also invite your comments about the position statement and recommendations of Dietitians of Canada on Household Food Insecurity.

“Support” refers to general agreement with the factual content of and proposed recommendations for advocacy in the documents indicated.

1. Do you have questions or suggestions about the content in these documents? No.
2. Do you foresee ways that your organization could use these documents in your advocacy work or other practice? Yes.
3. Are there opportunities for collaboration with your organization in the future? We would be happy to discuss potential actions. Yes. CDPAC would be pleased to discuss.

Contact:

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