May 16, 2010

Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Re: Protecting children from commercial marketing of unhealthy foods & beverages

Dear Honourable Minister,

On behalf of the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada (CDPAC) I request a meeting with you to discuss how Canada might address the commercial marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children.

The Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada (CDPAC) is a network of ten national organizations who share a common vision for an integrated system of research, surveillance, policies, and programs for maintaining health and prevention of chronic disease in Canada.

As you know, there is growing concern world-wide regarding the ever worrisome obesity crisis – especially amongst our children - that has been enveloping the globe. There is also a growing scientific opinion that restrictions on the commercial marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages are a critical component of any realistic efforts to address childhood obesity.

A great opportunity exists at the upcoming meeting of the World Health Assembly (WHA) to address this issue. There is a chance that the WHA will resume its consideration of how we might limit the marketing to children as part of its efforts to encourage national governments to implement the *Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*. We urge you to champion the health and well-being of children by supporting efforts to advance strong measures at the World Health Assembly to protect children from commercial marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages.

Since 1980, the Government of Quebec has been a world leader in protecting children from commercial marketing, including unhealthy foods & beverages, targeting children under 13. Sweden and Norway later enacted similar laws and, two years ago, the United Kingdom government instituted a ban on many television advertisements for unhealthy foods and beverages targeted at children under age 16.

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We would be happy to discuss this important matter with you further and will watch with interest the Government of Canada's contribution at the WHA. We would appreciate a meeting with you at your convenience sometime after the WHA meeting to discuss some potential next steps.

Sincerely,

Paul Lapierre,
Chair