

## **Memo: Health Canada Consultations Restricting Marketing of Unhealthy Food and Beverages to Children**

Recently you received an email from Dan Smith, Director General for Sport Canada, encouraging you to participate in Health Canada consultations on restricting the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children. Sport Matters has received several inquiries from National Sport Organizations and wanted to provide further context.

Sport Matters strongly recommends that all NSO/MSOs participate in the [online consultation](#), and encourage your membership to participate. The deadline for participating is **August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017**. Additionally, later this summer Sport Matters will develop a generic letter to Senator Nancy Greene Raine that you can edit, sign and send, outlining the challenges associated to the proposed Bill S-228. Finally, we will try to coordinate a meeting with Senator Raine and other key Senators in the Fall to seek clarification and provide additional feedback on the impact of Bill S-228 on the sport community.

### Background

In 2016, the Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Health, launched the Healthy Eating Strategy for Canada. One of the intended outcomes of the Healthy Eating Strategy is to help make the healthier food choice the easier choice. To help achieve this, Health Canada is currently working on several initiatives including:

- new restrictions on marketing to children to support families in making healthier food choices; and,
- a revision of Canada's Food Guide to better address the changing food environment and to support Canadians in making healthier food choices.

One factor that influences childhood obesity is marketing. Children, particularly at a younger age, are easily influenced by advertising, and evidence shows that the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to kids is associated with an increased risk of childhood obesity.

On June 10, 2017, Health Canada launched a public consultation on restricting the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children. The proposed approach aims to protect children from marketing tactics that encourage them to eat unhealthy foods.

The participation of Canada's sport sector is essential to this consultation process. Health Canada is aware of possible impacts that potential new restrictions on marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children may have on Canada's sport landscape.

### Potential Impact on the sport sector

(provided by the Association of Canadian Advertisers)

- The Senate is proceeding with Bill S-228 An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibiting food and beverage marketing directed at children). The Bill, sponsored by former Olympic hero Senator Nancy Greene Raine, is headed for Third Reading in early fall and could very realistically be passed by the House of Commons by year end.
- Bill S-228 paves the way for Health Canada to ban any form of marketing (advertising, sponsorship and promotions) of what it deems to be unhealthy food to children under the age of 17 by food and beverage companies by as early as 2019.
- This could have serious consequences for professional and amateur sport leagues and teams in terms of future access to sponsorship dollars from food and beverage companies and advertising revenues from TV, Radio and Print partners.
- Regulations being considered by Health Canada could go as far as prohibiting corporate sponsors or advertisers from promoting their corporate brand if it is deemed by Health Canada that the company offers unhealthy foods and beverages in its product mix.
- To put this in perspective, Bill S-228 and the regulations now being drafted by Health Canada will bring

an end to corporate cause campaigns such as Tim Horton's Camp Day and McHappy Day for Ronald McDonald House. Corporate sponsorship of kids' sports activities such as Timbits Minor Hockey and Soccer programs will also be banned and it will take corporate sponsorship dollars out of events such as the Tim Hortons Brier.

- With implementation of the Bill and the regulations possibly coming into effect by 2019, you could feel the impact in the coming months as contracts come up for renewal, with sponsors and advertisers looking to other channels to invest their marketing dollars.
- For a summary of Senator Raine's position visit: <http://nancygreeneraine.ca/en/the-child-health-protection-act/>

The following statement is included in the Health Canada Discussion Paper:

*Sponsorship - Sports are an important part of many families' lives, and corporate sponsors can often help support that experience. Similarly, many school activities and supplies are sponsored by corporations. Unfortunately, less healthy foods are promoted through their association with sports and education, and studies have shown that kids are more likely to favour and consume products of companies that support their teams and schools. It is challenging to balance these competing interests, and parents are an important stakeholder in this issue.*

### Next Steps

- Register to provide you input through the Health Canada Online Consultation Tool: <https://www.healthyeatingconsultations.ca/register>
- Consider using the following key messages and any sponsorship data related to your organization to respond to Question #7: *Are there certain situations where some marketing techniques should be exempted from broad marketing restrictions?*

### Key Messages

- The Canadian Sponsorship landscape is valued at approximately \$1.98B. Of this, approximately 31.5% is spent on professional sport and 22.1% on amateur sport or \$623M and \$437M respectively.<sup>1\*</sup>
- Sport organizations at the national, provincial and community level regularly solicit and enter into private sector partnerships to generate additional resources.
- Some of the sport sector's biggest private sector supporters are Tim Hortons, McDonalds, Danone, General Mills, and Coca Cola who have demonstrated that they share a common interest or a shared goal in advancing sport and physical activity.
- Inactivity is now the fourth leading cause of death worldwide, responsible for over 3.2 million deaths each year. In Canada, our citizens are sitting far too much and moving far too little: 22 million Canadian adults (80%) are NOT active enough, and 5 million Canadian children (91%) are NOT active enough.
- Even a modest increase in Canadians' movement over the next 25 years would result in reduced incidence of debilitating chronic diseases, including 222,000 fewer hypertension cases, 120,000 fewer diabetes cases, 170,000 fewer heart disease cases and 31,000 fewer cancer cases. Plus, premature mortality would be reduced by 2.4 per cent by 2020 alone, translating into more than 6,600 lives saved.<sup>i</sup>
- Because of limited government resources, private sector partnerships are a critical component for sport leagues and teams at the National and community level. Without this support, sport programming would become unaffordable for the majority and fewer children would have access to sport activities, clubs and leagues.

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\* 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Sponsorship Landscape Study:

[http://www.sponsorshiplandscape.ca/pdf/en/2017\\_11th\\_Annual\\_CSLS\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.sponsorshiplandscape.ca/pdf/en/2017_11th_Annual_CSLS_Final_Report.pdf)

<sup>i</sup> Fares Bounajm, Thy Dinh, Louis Theriault *Moving Ahead: The Economic Impact of Reducing Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour*. The Conference Board of Canada, October 24, 2014