

"Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids" report tabled in Parliament

OTTAWA (March 27, 2007) — Bill Jeffery, LLB, national coordinator of the Centre for Science in the Public Interest, issued the following statement in response to the report tabled in the House of Commons this morning.

For years, government authorities have been mere spectators to soaring rates of childhood obesity. This report emphasizes the need for governments to take firm actions to help make the healthy choice the easy choice and to go beyond the healthcare system treatment approach by focusing on prevention. Importantly, the report recommends requiring easy-to-understand nutrition symbols on the fronts of food labels and ridding the food supply of dangerous trans fat.

However, instead of calling for tight government controls on the marketing of unhealthy foods to children, it only recommended a study. And the report was silent on one important way to help Canadians consume fewer calories: Chain restaurants should be required to list calories on menu boards and additional information on printed menus.

We hope the report will produce real policy changes. The proposed annual progress reports to Parliament and the 2010 public relations deadline for the Vancouver Olympics should discipline the Government's response. With some MPs spoiling for a premature election, all parties' should reveal in their policy platforms how they aim to implement -- or improve upon -- the recommendations of today's Health Committee report. Federal and provincial governments should take heed that, without legislative reform and sensibly-funded prevention programs, this generation of children may be the first to live shorter life spans than their parents. Every year, eating patterns often established during childhood kill tens of thousands of Canadians by heart disease, certain forms of cancer and diabetes, hamstringing the economy with \$7 billion in unnecessary health-care costs and lost productivity, and burdening children with unprecedented rates of type-II diabetes.

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For more information, call: Bill Jeffery, National Coordinator of CSPI at 613-244-7337 who will be available for telephone interviews and will be in Toronto all day on Tuesday.

The Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is an independent health advocacy organization with offices in Ottawa, and Washington, D.C.. CSPI's Ottawa advocacy efforts are supported by more than 100,000 subscribers to the Canadian edition of its *Nutrition Action Healthletter*. CSPI does not accept industry or government funding. *Nutrition Action* does not carry advertisements