



Ontario Society of Nutrition
Professionals in Public Health

La société ontarienne des professionnel(le)s
de la nutrition en santé publique

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September 27, 2017

Dear Dr. Hutchison, Dr. Yan, Ms. Taylor and Dr. Hillmer,

The [Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health](http://www.osnp-ph.on.ca) (OSNPPH), the independent and official voice of Registered Dietitians working in Ontario's public health system, is writing to express our concern about the option for provinces and territories to measure household food insecurity (HFI). OSNPPH urges annual nation-wide monitoring in every province and territory of this serious and prevalent public health problem.

The Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM), included on annual cycles of Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey (CHHS), has facilitated monitoring of HFI in Canada since 2005. However, the HFSSM is not always mandatory. Regular and consistent monitoring of HFI is fundamental to population health research and evidence-based policy decision-making at all levels of government.

OSNPPH was disappointed to learn that Ontario was one of three provinces/territories that did not measure HFI in the 2015/2016 cycle of the CCHS. This was the first time since the HFSSM was added to the CCHS in 2005 that Ontario has not measured HFI. As a result, Ontario Public Health Units will not have access to provincial and local HFI data nor will it be possible to accurately estimate the prevalence of HFI nationally for those years. The most recent national estimate available is from 2012 when the HFSSM was mandatory for all jurisdictions. The next national assessment of food insecurity will be in 2017 and data will not likely be available until fall 2018. This gap in data impedes research on trends in food insecurity and the impact of public policies on the problem. It is critical that provinces and territories participate in all cycles of HFI measurement.

Ontario is the most populous jurisdiction in Canada and home to the single largest number of food-insecure households. Ontario's decision to opt out of measurement has serious consequences for analyses of trends in food insecurity, limiting our ability to see the impact of policy changes over this period. The lack of data for

2015 and 2016 also has ramifications for the assessment of the recently announced Ontario Food Security Strategy and Ontario Basic Income Pilot.

OSNPPH recommends that the HFSSM become a core module of the CCHS, whereby provinces and territories cannot opt-out.

Sincerely,



Erinn Salewski, RD
Co-chair, OSNPPH



Mary Ellen Prange, RD
OSNPPH Food Security Workgroup Chair

cc. Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health
Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
Hon. Eric Hoskins, Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hon. Helena Jaczek, Ontario Minister of Community and Social Services
Hon. Peter Milczyn, Ontario Minister of Housing and Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy
Pegeen Walsh, Executive Director, Ontario Public Health Association
Lynda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
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