



Ontario Dietitians in Public Health
Diététistes en santé publique de l'Ontario

www.odph.ca
info@odph.ca
@RDsPubHealthON

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Christine St-Pierre
Communications Coordinator
Northern Policy Institute
cstpierre@northernpolicy.ca

Dear Ms. St-Pierre,

[Ontario Dietitians in Public Health](#) (ODPH), the independent and official voice of Registered Dietitians working in Ontario's public health system, is writing to acknowledge the Northern Policy Institute's Commentary No. 26, [Setting the Table: Food Insecurity and Costs in Ontario's North](#). ODPH values the Northern Policy Institute (NPI) and the objective approach to issues impacting communities in northern Ontario. We were pleased to see interest and focus on the issue of food insecurity in the north.

Household food insecurity is a serious public health problem on which ODPH has taken a strong stance with our [Position Statement on Responses to Food Insecurity](#). For the past five years, ODPH has been steadfast in promoting awareness and advocating for effective measures to address the primary root cause – poverty.

Upon thorough review of the NPI's food insecurity report, we have identified a few concerns mainly pertaining to how food cost data were collected and applied as well as the focus in the recommendations on food cost, as opposed to social determinants of health that affect household food security in the north. Although it is recognized that food costs are higher in northern Ontario, particularly in remote communities, there are significant disparities in social determinants of health such as income/poverty, housing, Indigenous status, or employment/skills and job security. Please refer to the attached table that identifies specific sections of the report where we have concerns and supportive evidence/resources that could be considered.

ODPH would be pleased to connect with NPI to discuss our concerns and/or provide advice and support based on our experience of monitoring food affordability in Ontario since 1998. Please feel free to contact ODPH members Laura Dias (diasl@timiskaminghu.com) or Mary Ellen Prange (maryellen.prange@hamilton.ca), Co-chair of the Food Insecurity Workgroup. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Doris, RD
Co-Chair ODPH

Laura Dias
Member, ODPH Food Insecurity Workgroup

cc. Jennifer Buccino, Ontario Regional Executive Director, Dietitians of Canada