

DRAFT **YOUTH ACTION** **on** **FOOD INSECURITY**

A toolkit for secondary school students to use
in clubs and other extracurricular activities

2019



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Introduction

1.6 million Ontarians, including almost half a million children under the age of 18, experience food insecurity because they do not have enough money to buy food. Income solutions, such as a basic income guarantee, are needed. Food charity is not enough!

What Is Food Insecurity?

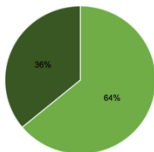
Food insecurity is not having enough money to buy food. It is a serious problem in our province. Here are some shocking facts:



1 in 8 households in Ontario is food insecure.¹



1 in 6 children in Ontario lives in a household that is food insecure.¹



64% of Ontario households receiving social assistance are food insecure.²



60% of food insecure households in Ontario have employment income.¹



121% more health care costs are incurred by Ontario adults living in severely food insecure households compared to those living in food secure households.³

Why Isn't Charity Solving the Problem?

Food banks provide short term relief. They do not help to make people less food insecure. Only income solutions that give people enough money, such as a [basic income guarantee](#)⁴, good paying jobs with benefits or adequate social assistance rates, will help address the root cause of food insecurity.

What Can You Do?

Spread the word! Federal and provincial governments are more likely to act if the public shows support for income solutions.

The ***Youth Action on Food Insecurity Toolkit*** provides information and resources to help raise awareness and support for income solutions to food insecurity and to ensure everyone has enough money to feed themselves and their families with dignity!

¹ <https://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Household-Food-Insecurity-in-Canada-2014.pdf>

² https://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Household_Food_Insecurity_in_Canada-2012_ENG.pdf

³ <http://www.cmaj.ca/content/187/14/E429>

⁴ A Basic Income Guarantee ensures everyone an income sufficient to meet basic needs and live with dignity, regardless of work status.
<https://www.basikincomecanada.org/>

Is this Toolkit for You?

Would you like to make a difference in people's lives? Do you have an interest in social justice issues? Are you part of a school club or council devoted to making social change? Are you interested in learning more about how to advocate for an important cause? Do you want to try something different and meet new people?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then this toolkit is for you. Please read on to learn how to run a successful awareness raising campaign and learn more about food insecurity and income solutions.

Steps to a Successful Awareness Raising Campaign

Hosting an awareness raising campaign in your school is a great opportunity to kick off an ongoing conversation about food insecurity, a topic that is often misunderstood. The following steps can help you create a strong campaign that will increase community awareness on income solutions to food insecurity.

- 1. Gather your group and discuss your approach.** Find out what group members think about food insecurity and how to solve this problem. Discuss any personal experiences with food insecurity. Review some of the examples of activities to run during your campaign (see page 5) and decide which approach your group wants to use. Make sure to find out what each member is good at and use these skills to help develop and implement the campaign.
- 2. Determine the best time to run the campaign.** Holidays tend to be the times when people reflect on what they have and are concerned about those who might not have enough to eat. Another good time to run an awareness raising campaign is around elections. Food insecurity is a serious problem, and raising awareness about it during election time will increase the likelihood that candidates take this problem seriously. Also, if your school is running a food drive, running this campaign at the same time will inform people that there are additional actions people can take that address the real root of the problem.
- 3. Decide which activities will be part of the campaign.** Once you know when the campaign will take place, you can start to schedule activities that support your approach (see page 5).
- 4. Develop a social media plan.** Raise awareness during your campaign by scheduling posts about each of the activities. Make sure someone monitors the posts to respond to 'likes' and 'retweets'.

- 5. Share your successes.** Make sure to keep track of ‘likes’ and ‘shares’ on social media to follow your campaign’s success. Take pictures (with permission) at activities you host or attend as part of your campaign and share them on social media. At the end of your campaign post about the success of your campaign, and thank those who made it successful.

Examples of Activities for your Club or Group to Do during a Campaign

- Hold a Youth Action on Food Insecurity display at lunchtime
 - Hand out copies of the Information Card and Infographic (below)
 - Demonstrate the “Make the Month” activity and play online if you have a laptop or tablet
 - Display examples of foods available at food banks and ask, “What would you do if these were your food options every month?”
 - Ask your local Public Health Unit if they have any swag they can provide for people participating in the display
- Incorporate Toolkit messages at school
 - Write an article for the student newspaper
 - Work with the Audiovisual club to make a video or a radio announcement
 - Show your video or one of the videos below (see page 10) at a school assembly
- Submit a story, about the club, its messages and activities in the local newspaper around election time or when the school is running a food drive
- Submit the letter to the editor of your local paper (see page 9)
- Host a “Make a Month” activity during a school health fair so that students can start to understand what it is like to live in poverty
- Write a letter to a reporter who has written on food insecurity and explain how the solution is income related
- Implement a social media campaign by developing a schedule of posts to share across different platforms (see page 11)
- Show one of the videos (page 10) during a school event and host a discussion
- Invite an election candidate, MP, MPP, or other government representative to your school and ask questions about food insecurity

- Attend a rally or a debate for election candidates as a club, class or school
- Include an announcement each morning during the campaign
- Post Information Cards (page 7) or Infographic (page 8) on bulletin boards, in classrooms, by vending machines, in the cafeteria, by the school office, by water fountains
- Suggest the “Make the Month” on-line activity (page 6) to a teacher you think might be interested, such as a Math or Food and Nutrition teacher

Sources to Use to Inform Your Campaign

- [Ontario Dietitians in Public Health: No Money for Food is Cent\\$less](#)
- [PROOF - Food insecurity](#)
- [PROOF - Food insecurity fact sheets](#)
- [PROOF - Household food insecurity in Canada, 2014 report](#)
- [PROOF - Tackling household food insecurity: An essential goal of a national food policy](#)
- [Basic Income Canada Network - Food Insecurity](#)

Resources to Use in Your Campaign

“Make the Month” Activity

An interactive digital poverty simulation that enables Canadians to experience living in poverty and face decisions that will either make or break the month.

<http://makethemonth.ca/>

Youth Action on Food Insecurity Information Card

Food Insecurity - not having enough money to buy food - is a serious problem in Ontario

WHAT?



Food insecurity is the inability to buy food because of low incomes. It affects about 1 in 8 households in Ontario.

SO WHAT?

Food charity is not enough to keep people from going hungry. Income solutions are needed to improve people's **financial situations**.



NOW WHAT?

Visit www.odph.ca/centsless to learn more about what you can do to help end food insecurity.



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

Youth Action on Food Insecurity Infographic

Food Insecurity - not having enough money to buy food - is a serious problem in Ontario

Who is food insecure?



What's the problem?

Food insecurity is linked to higher rates of:



diabetes, high blood pressure & heart disease²



depression, anxiety & suicidal thoughts³

What's the solution?

The effective solution **increases** people's incomes through:

- a basic income guarantee
- jobs with livable wages and benefits
- adequate social assistance rates

Food charity does **NOT** solve the problem!



Income solutions...



preserve dignity



address the root of the problem



give choice of which foods to buy



ensure the basic right to food

What can YOU do?

Find the Youth Action on Food Insecurity Toolkit, and sign our e-letter to 2019 federal election candidates at:

www.odph/centsless



1. Spread the word

Follow ODPH on Twitter @RDsPubHealthON, retweet our #foodinsecurity tweets, and use the Youth Action on Food Insecurity toolkit



2. Sign our letter

Sign our e-letter to let federal political party leaders know that we need income solutions to food insecurity



3. Attend an election debate

Ask candidates what income solutions they will implement to reduce food insecurity

References

1. Tarasuk V, Mitchell A, Dachner N. (2016). Household food insecurity in Canada, 2014. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved from <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>
2. Vazirani NT, Tarasuk V. Household food insufficiency is associated with poorer health. J Nutr. 2003;133(1):120-126.
3. Jellison-Perreault G, McIntyre L. The household food insecurity gradient and potential reductions in adverse population mental health outcomes in Canadian adults. SSM-Population Health. 2017;3:464-72.

www.odph.ca
@RDsPubHealthON



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

August 2019

Youth Action on Food Insecurity Sample Letter to the Editor

Please use as is, or modify with any personal details you would like to include.

Dear Editor

I am writing as a high school student who is concerned about food insecurity. Food insecurity is inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints. In Ontario 1 in 8 households, or about 12%, experiences food insecurity. Far too many people in our community cannot afford to pay the rent, bills AND put enough food on the table.

Food insecurity negatively impacts physical and mental health, and the ability to lead productive lives. It is shameful that so many people are living in poverty and struggling to put food on the table in a country as wealthy as Canada. And we pay a high price for food insecurity, given the drain that it has on health care, mental health, and productivity.

Only income solutions that give people enough money, such as a [basic income guarantee](#), good paying jobs with benefits and adequate social assistance rates, will help address the root cause of food insecurity.

It is time we stood up for the right to food. We must all let our elected representatives know that we care about this urgent human rights and social justice issue.

Sincerely,

Sample Videos

It takes more than food to solve food insecurity video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=aAadrV9RjBg

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit *No Money for Food is ... Cent\$less* videos

<http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/HealthEquity/poverty=hunger>

Today we're going to find out who's better for the economy video

<https://www.facebook.com/PeoplesMomentum/videos/the-many-vs-the-few/388225758448846/>

Cartoon strip comparing rich vs. poor upbringing

<https://digitalsynopsis.com/inspiration/privileged-kids-on-a-plate-pencilword-toby-morris/>

Campaign Hashtags

The hashtags below are already being used to raise awareness of the issue. Feel free to add you own based on the details of your campaign.

#foodinsecurity #basicincome #onpoli #cdnpoli

Sample Twitter Posts

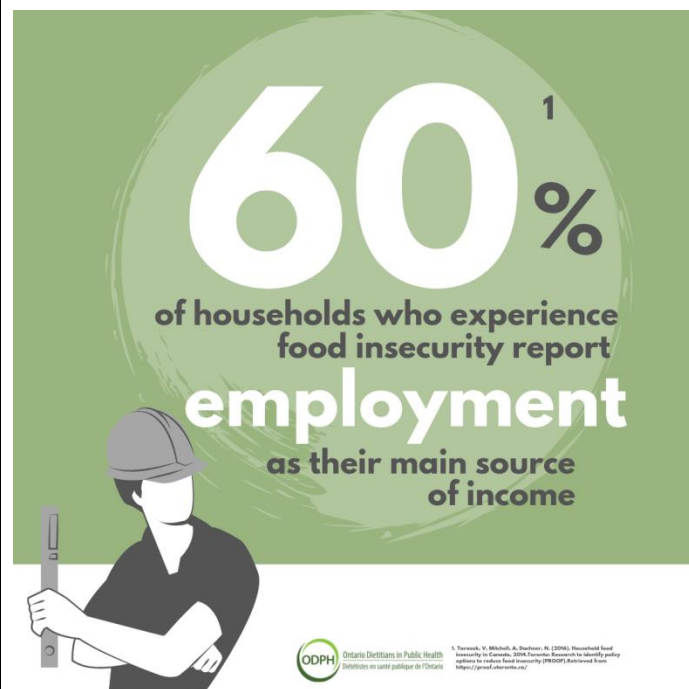
Use these postings for your personal account. Feel free to add your own photos.

	Posting	Attached Image
1	<p>Did you know that #foodinsecurity – not having enough money to buy food – affects 1 in 8 households in Ontario? That's ~1.6 million people...way too many! Check out @RDsPubHealthON website for more info:</p> <p>http://bit.ly/2DRKYoK</p>	 <p>ODPH Ontario Directorate in Public Health Directions en santé publique de l'Ontario</p> <p><small>1. Tremblay, M., McDonald, A., & Bradburn, N. (2014). Household food insecurity in Ontario: 2014 Toronto Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved from http://www.ontario.ca</small></p>
2	<p>~4M people live with #foodinsecurity in Canada. This is unacceptable!</p> <p>http://bit.ly/2DRKYoK</p>	 <p>Household food insecurity by province & territory, 2014</p> <p>Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2014.</p>

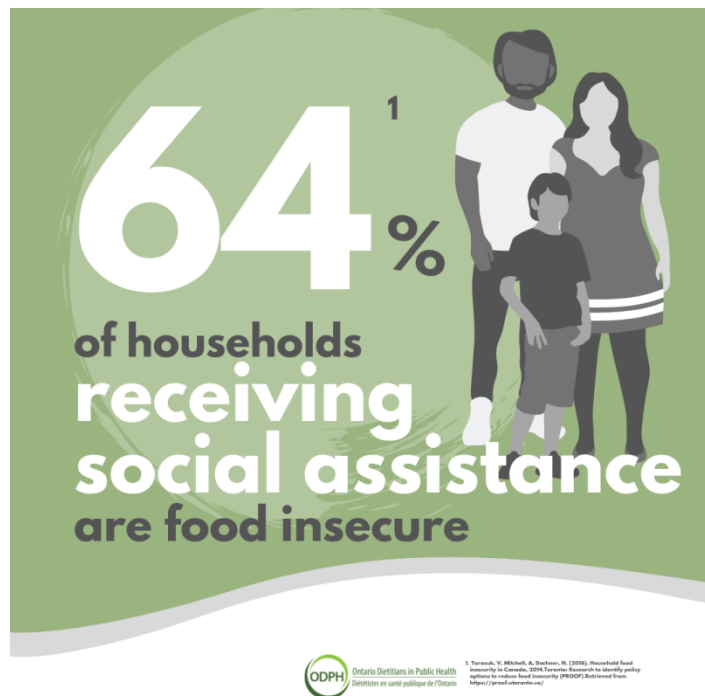
- 3** Did you know that food charity does not reduce #foodinsecurity? Only improving people's financial situations is effective at reducing food insecurity! Learn more about what you can do to help at <http://bit.ly/2WPp2ly>



- 4** Most households who are food insecure have employment. Solutions like a #basicincome can help all Canadians afford food <http://bit.ly/2DRKYok>



5 Did you know that over 64% of households receiving social assistance in Ontario experience #foodinsecurity? A #basicincome could help improve the financial situations of all Canadians. Click here to learn more
<http://bit.ly/2RsYOW4>



6 If you want to learn more about #foodinsecurity and what is needed to solve it, watch this video by @RDsPubHealthON
<https://bit.ly/2ToodBA>



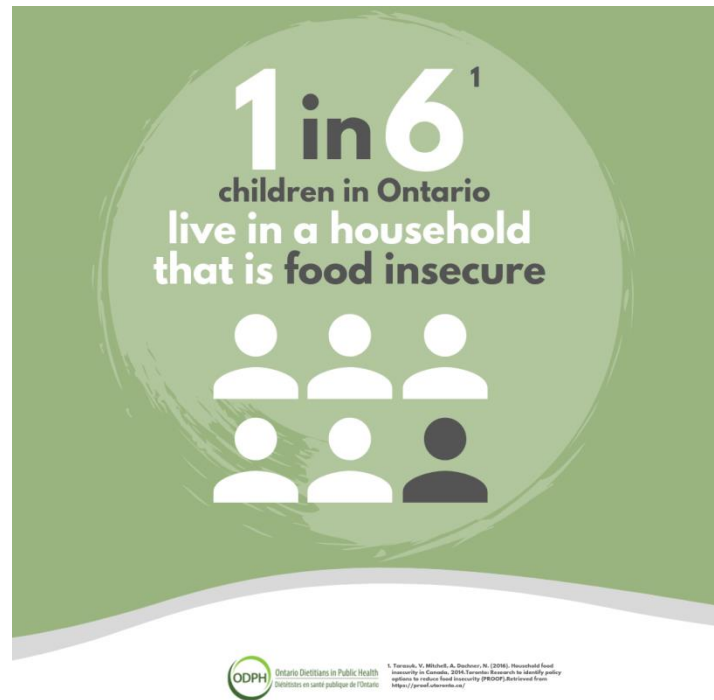
7

Did you know that #foodinsecurity negatively impacts the physical and mental health of Canadians? Read this infographic by @PROOFCanada to learn more <http://bit.ly/2ZwM7wp>






8

Did you know that 1 in 6 children in Ontario experience #foodinsecurity. Find out what you can do to help <http://bit.ly/2WPp2ly>



9	Do you want to raise awareness about income solutions to #foodinsecurity at your school? Check out the Youth Action on Food Insecurity toolkit here http://bit.ly/2WPp2ly					
10	#foodinsecurity is a burden on our healthcare system. Improving food security = healthier Canadians = lower healthcare spending. Everyone should make reducing food insecurity a priority http://bit.ly/2DRKYok	<p>Average healthcare costs incurred over 12 months by Ontario adults (aged 18-64) by household food insecurity status.</p> <table><tr><td><p>\$1608</p><p>Food secure</p></td><td><p>\$2161</p><p>Marginally food insecure</p></td><td><p>\$2806</p><p>Moderately food insecure</p></td><td><p>\$3930</p><p>Severely food insecure</p></td></tr></table>	<p>\$1608</p>  <p>Food secure</p>	<p>\$2161</p>  <p>Marginally food insecure</p>	<p>\$2806</p>  <p>Moderately food insecure</p>	<p>\$3930</p>  <p>Severely food insecure</p>
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11	When income is low, people cannot pay for rent, bills, AND food. Improving peoples incomes can reduce #foodinsecurity. http://bit.ly/2DRKYok	<div><p>When income is too low, people do not have enough \$ for rent, bills AND food</p></div>				

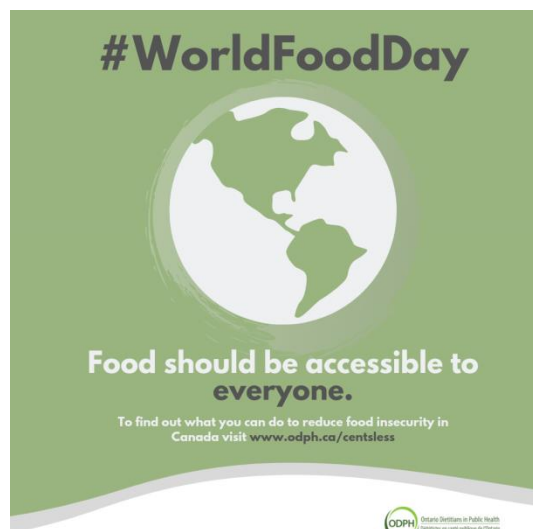
12	<p>Did you know that food is a human right in Canada? But, ~4M Cdns can't financially access enough food. Let your representatives know that the govt is obligated to reduce #foodinsecurity http://bit.ly/2WPp2ly #onpoli #cdnpoli</p>	
13	<p>The Guaranteed Income Supplement and Old Age Security programs help to reduce #foodinsecurity for seniors. A similar #basicincome would help to reduce #foodinsecurity for ALL working-age adults. Learn more here http://bit.ly/2DRKYoK</p>	
14	<p>Did you know that #foodinsecurity is not a problem related to poor cooking or budgeting skills? It's a problem of not enough income to afford food. Learn more here http://bit.ly/2DRKYoK</p>	

15 Happy #thanksgiving! Many Canadians can't afford enough to eat. Tell our next leader that you want to live in a country where everyone has enough income to afford food <http://bit.ly/2WPp2Iy> #cdnpoli

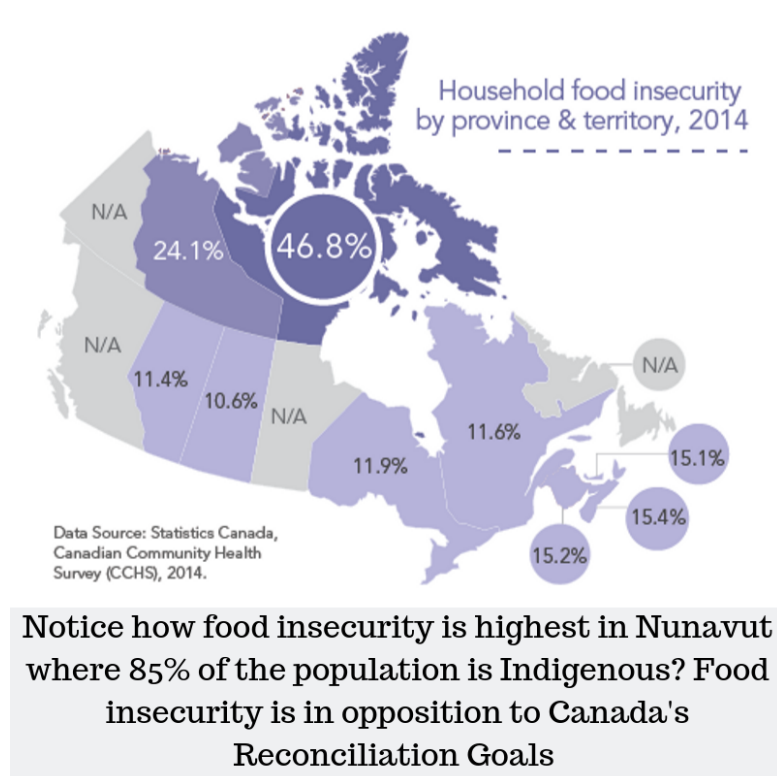



16 Today is #WorldFoodDay. 4M ppl, including 1.5M kids, experience #foodinsecurity in Canada. We must take action to help everyone afford enough food for themselves and their families. Learn what you can do to help here <http://bit.ly/2DRKYok>

(To be used on October 16, 2019)




Sample Instagram Posts







Food insecurity-
inadequate or insecure
access to food due to
financial constraints-
negatively impacts physical
mental and social health




Heart Disease
Type 2 Diabetes
High Blood Pressure





Loneliness
Anxiety
Depression
Suicidal Thoughts



One in six children in Ontario lives
in a Food Insecure Household



Not having enough food can
cause



Stomach aches Decreased
Chronic pains concentration

Poor school performance



Headaches



Food insecurity is not a budgeting issue

It's a problem of not enough
money to begin with



Sample Morning Announcements

1. Good morning (school name). Today is the first day of our (school event name, e.g., Food Insecurity Awareness Week and name of group organizing the campaign). Food insecurity is defined as not having enough money to buy food. Did you know that 1 in 8 Ontario households experienced food insecurity in 2014? That's about 1.6 million Ontarians who struggled to put food on the table. Check out our Instagram posts this week (Instagram name where posts are located) to learn more about food insecurity.
2. Good morning (school name). Today is day two of our (school event name, e.g., Food Insecurity Awareness Week and name of group organizing the campaign). Did you know that food insecurity is closely linked to higher rates of physical and mental illness? People who experience food insecurity need a lot more medical care than people who do not have food insecurity. Check out (Instagram name where posts are located) to learn more about food insecurity.
3. Good morning (school name). Today is day three of our (school event name, e.g., Food Insecurity Awareness Week and name of group organizing the campaign). Did you know that communities in the territories are disproportionately affected by food insecurity? Food insecurity is currently a barrier to Canada's goals of reconciliation. Check out (Instagram name where posts are located) to learn more about food insecurity.
4. Good morning (school name). Today is day four of our (school event name, e.g., Food Insecurity Awareness Week and name of group organizing the campaign). Did you know that about one in six children under the age of 18 in Ontario lives in a household experiencing food insecurity? This is unacceptable! We all need to speak up to ensure that all kids have the resources to learn and develop equally. Check out (Instagram name where posts are located) to learn more about food insecurity.
5. Good morning (school name). Today is the last day of our (school event name, e.g., Food Insecurity Awareness Week and name of group organizing the campaign). We have been so impressed with your involvement this week! Check out the (e.g., booth, video, article in student newspaper) to get some information and ideas on how to help more. Also check out (Instagram) to find a link to a sample letter that we can all send to (Name of local elected official) to let them know we're concerned about our friends and neighbours not having enough money to buy food.

Feedback Survey

Please share your feedback on this Toolkit with Ontario Dietitians in Public Health (ODPH) by completing a short survey available at this link: <https://bit.ly/2km9h9O>. The survey will close on December 20, 2019.

The survey consists of six questions and should only take 5-10 minutes to complete.

Your comments will help us to improve the toolkit for future users!

Sincerely,

Tracy Woloshyn (tracy.woloshyn@york.ca) and Mary Ellen Prange (maryellen.prange@hamilton.ca)

On behalf of Ontario Dietitians in Public Health