



Grant Crack, MPP
Chair, Standing Committee on General Government
Room 1405, Whitney Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2

April 21, 2015

RE: Bill 45, Making Healthier Choices Act – Schedule 1, Healthy Menu Choices Act

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on General Government:

On behalf of the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH), we are writing to provide the following recommendations for amendments to Bill 45, Making Healthier Choices Act: a) inclusion of both calories and sodium content; and b) provision of reference values.

OSNPPH is the independent and official voice of over 200 Registered Dietitians working in Ontario's public health system. OSNPPH provides leadership in public health nutrition by promoting and supporting member collaboration to improve the health of Ontario residents. The OSNPPH supports menu labelling as a population health strategy that assists consumers to make informed and healthier food choices. As outlined in our [key messages](#) and [position paper](#), OSNPPH makes recommendations based on emerging best practices for menu labelling. As such, OSNPPH provides the following two (2) recommendations for amending Bill 45 Schedule 1, Healthy Menu Choices Act:

Both calorie and sodium content information should be displayed.

OSNPPH strongly supports menu labelling that includes both calories and sodium as a population health strategy that assists consumers to make informed and healthier food choices. Bill 45 Schedule 1, Healthy Menu Choices Act intends to create more supportive food environments to support families in making healthier food choices as one strategy to improve health outcomes of Ontario children¹. In addition to listing caloric content, OSNPPH asserts that milligrams of sodium in standard menu items should also be listed because the average sodium intake of all ages of Canadian children exceeds the tolerable upper limit established by the Institute of Medicine². Based on an analysis of Canadian restaurant chain menus, the majority of menu items contain high levels of sodium³. This legislation provides the opportunity to help prevent more children from joining the Canadian average of consuming double the recommended amount of sodium² the 90% of Canadians who will develop hypertension⁴ as



they age⁵, and the 1.3 million Canadians who are living with cardiovascular disease⁶; of a panel of about 3000 Canadians, 75% would like to see calories on the menu and 71% want sodium³.

Menus and menu boards should also include reference values for calories and sodium.

Evidence suggests that listing nutrition information along with contextual or interpretive nutrition information on restaurant menus helps consumers select healthier menu choices^{8,9}. Reference values put nutrient amounts in the context of daily needs and support consumers' use of nutrition information¹⁰. Reference statements should be age-appropriate for children and adults in order to address the different nutrient needs for adults and children^{1,11}. A simple statement such as the following should be required on the menu: "The average adult should consume about 2,000 calories per day and about 1,500 mg of sodium per day. A child aged 4-8 should consume approximately 1,200 mg of sodium and no more than 1,900 mg of sodium."

OSNP-PH applauds this government for its leadership and commitment to taking action towards implementing this important legislation to make the healthier choice the easiest choice, especially for our children. We urge you to make the above amendments to further demonstrate your leadership and commitment to creating healthier and more transparent food environments for Ontario's families, who increasingly rely on food and beverages prepared outside the home.

Sincerely,

Renée Gaudet, RD MHSc.
Chairperson,
OSNP-PH Menu Labelling Working Group

Rebecca Davids, RD, MSc
Co-Chair Year 2, OSNP-PH

CC:

Sylwia Przewdziecki, Clerk

¹Ministry of Health & Long Term Care. No time to Wait: Healthy Kids Panel Report. 2013. Available at http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/healthy_kids/healthy_kids.pdf.

²Garriguet D. Sodium consumption at all ages. Health Rep. 2007 [cited 2011 Mar 07];18(2):47-52. Available from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2006004/article/sodium/9608-eng.pdf>.

³Scourboutakos, M. & L'Abbé, M. (2013). Restaurant Menu-Labelling Survey Results. Prepared For Toronto Public Health.

⁴He, F.J. & MaGregor, G.A. Salt Reduction & Blood Pressure. Importance of Salt in Deterring Blood pressure in Children. Meta Analysis of controlled Trials. 2006; 48:861-869.



⁵Vasan RS, Beiser A, et al. Residual lifetime risk for developing hypertension in middle aged women and men: The Framingham Heart Study. *Jl of the American Medical Assn.* 2002; 287:1003-1010 cited in Appel L (Panel Chair). *Dietary Reference Intakes for Water, Potassium, Sodium, Chloride, and Sulfate.* U.S. Inst. of Medicine. Washington, D.C. 2005 at 354.

⁶Public Health Agency of Canada. 2009 Tracking Heart Disease and Stroke in Canada. Available at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/2009/cvd-avc/report-rapport-eng.php>. Accessed December 10, 2014.

⁷Canadians' Perceptions of, and Support for, Potential Measures to Prevent and Reduce Childhood Obesity *Final Report*. Prepared for: Public Health Agency of Canada. Prepared by: Ipsos Reid. November 2011 at page which found that 92% of Canadians supported "Requiring fast food restaurants to list nutrition information, such as caloric, fat, and sugar content, on their menus." Available at: <http://www.sportmatters.ca/files/Reports/Ipsos%20Obesity%202011.pdf>

⁸Pang, J. & Hammond, D. (2013). Efficacy and consumer preferences for different approaches to calorie labeling on menus. *Journal of Nutrition Education & Behaviour.* 2013 Nov-Dec;45(6):669-75.

⁹Sinclair, SE., Cooper, M, Mansfield ED. (2014). The influence of menu labeling on calories selected or consumed: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.* Sep: 114(9): 1375-1388.

¹⁰Catherine L.Mah MFP, Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health Menu Labeling Workgroup. *Serving Up Nutrition Information in Ontario Restaurants: A Position Paper by the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health Menu Labeling Workgroup.* 2013 Jan 5.

¹¹Health Canada, Sodium in Canada. Recommended intake for sodium. Available at <http://hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/sodium/index-eng.php>.