

For Immediate Release

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Romanow Commission report takes a “preventive” step

Ottawa—[The Canadian Public Health Association \(CPHA\)](#) applauds the Romanow Commission report recommendation to place greater emphasis on prevention and health promotion to enable Canadians to be the healthiest people in the world. However, the report does not reflect an understanding of the unique role of public health in disease prevention and health promotion.

Public Health works around the clock to ensure safe food and water, safe places to live and work, and healthy choices to keep Canadians free from illness and injury. Whether it’s preventing injury through bicycle helmet use or protecting people against disease through environmental protection. Public Health works!

“It’s not enough to change the hospital sector or reduce waiting lists. We need to keep people from getting sick in the first place. That’s the role of Public Health,” says Dr. Christina Mills, CPHA’s President. “Many Public Health interventions are not only cost-effective, but cost saving. We must invest in public health or our health care system will not be sustainable.”

Only about 5% of health spending goes toward Public Health. Yet, for that small investment, Canadians have gained 20 years of life expectancy as well as improved health and quality of life.

“We need to double our current investment in Public Health to keep Canadians healthy, says Dr. Mills. “This will strengthen our capacity to deal with such diverse threats to Canadians’ health as diabetes, obesity, water contamination and new causes of disease such as the West Nile virus.”

“In addition to improving our ability to monitor and control disease, we must also focus on the broader issues that affect health, especially poverty, affordable housing and low literacy. Public Health and its partners will play a major role in meeting these challenges.”

We applaud the report’s recommendations for a comprehensive health human resource plan. We urge immediate action in public health human resources through the creation of a Virtual School of Public Health. Similarly, there is need for a visible public health focus in the proposed Health Council of Canada.

We welcome the report’s recommendations for a national immunization strategy and for concerted efforts in the areas of tobacco, obesity and physical activity.

CPHA’s mission is to constitute a special national resource in Canada that advocates for the improvement and maintenance of personal and community health according to the public health principles of disease prevention, health promotion and protection and healthy public policy.

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