

SYMPOSIUM ON OBESITY

SEEKING SOLUTIONS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

June 14-15, 2004

Symposium and Workshops **Summary**

THE PROGRAM IN FOOD SAFETY, NUTRITION AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

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July 15, 2004

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The PFSNRA gratefully acknowledges the interest and financial support of its industry members, as well as the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and the Canadian Cancer Society. We also thank the symposium planning committee, speakers, workshop participants, recorder and author of this summary (Dr. Loretta DiFrancesco, *Source! Nutrition*) and all 350 individuals who attended.

SYMPOSIUM ON OBESITY: SEEKING SOLUTIONS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Overall Objective: To bring together members of the food industry, academics, public health practitioners, NGOs and policymakers to promote partnerships aimed at addressing obesity.

SIMPLIFIED AND CONDENSED TAKE-AWAY POINTS

- Obesity has increased in North America and globally
- Due to the broad based, complex set of factors that contribute to obesity, solutions must be multifaceted
- While there remains debate about the nature of dietary change over the years, the propensity for increased intake is plausible as the food environment has provided increased availability, variety and energy density of foods
- At the same time, physical activity has decreased primarily due to activity-related environmental factors such as transportation and technology-driven, labour-saving devices at home, work and school, as well as increased sedentary activity including time spent watching television or using computers for work and entertainment
- Investigators and stakeholders in the obesity issue agree that it is important to make changes in every day life
- Although food marketing and advertising may have contributed to the problem, the food industry has provided examples of its commitment to seeking solutions to obesity
- With public health at stake, federal and provincial governments are also committed to reducing the prevalence of obesity through their strategy on healthy living
- A real-life example of a collaborative approach among the health research and promotion and industry sectors is *Canada on the Move*
- An intersection model focussing on the areas of participation in similar activities would leverage the expertise of all organizations to help address obesity in Canada
- Common themes that can serve as a framework for taking action and promoting partnerships aimed at addressing the problem of obesity in Canada are: understanding the nature of the problem and determining the effectiveness of prevention or intervention programs; communication and integration among sectors to address these issues; and, the need for political leadership

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INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME (*opening comments by Dr. Harvey Anderson*)

- The Symposium on Obesity was hosted by the University of Toronto Program in Food Safety, Nutrition and Regulatory Affairs (PFSNRA), in addition to contributions from the Canadian Cancer Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
- The obesity issue was addressed by PFSNRA through this symposium as part of the PFSNRA mission to address the scientific basis of current issues of food, nutrition, health and regulatory activities through collaboration with scientists and health professionals from universities, the food industry and government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to achieve the goal of a healthier Canadian population
- The objective of the Symposium on Obesity was to bring together members of the food industry, academics, public health practitioners, NGOs and policy makers to promote partnerships aimed at addressing the problem of obesity
- It is startling to see how rapidly obesity has emerged in North America and globally, resulting in a broad range of activities from all sectors of the nutrition and health community
- The agenda for the Symposium on Obesity was developed to broadly present and foster discussion on the problem of obesity from the perspectives of researchers, the food industry, policy makers and health organizations

OBESITY IN CANADA – THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Obesity In Canada: The Multifactorial Origins Of Energy Imbalance
Dr. Rena Mendelson, Professor, Ryerson University and University of Toronto

- The obesity trend in North America has been tracking fast and upward
- In 2000, almost all regions of Canada and the United States were showing 20% or greater obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or greater) in the adult population, compared to less than 10% obesity among adults in most regions of Canada in 1985
- Both overweight and obesity are of concern; taken together, 40-50% (depending on the province) of Canadian adults are overweight or obese according to the Canadian Community Health Survey (2000-2001)
- Under reporting self-reported weights and refusing to be weighed are survey limitations that could result in the true prevalence of obesity being underestimated by 5%
- The cause of obesity is a combination of personal choices in food consumption and energy expenditure, in addition to structural or environmental factors
- On the food intake side of energy balance, appetite is complex and influenced by diverse factors, including metabolic, social, disease and pharmacological influencers, as well as food preferences and aversions
- Several trends in the food environment, such as more food being prepared outside the home, the availability of cheaper, faster and more caloric dense foods and increased

servings sizes, could also be accounting for increased food intake; for example, a sampling of serving sizes of commonly consumed foods shows portion sizes have increased two-fold or more from 1977 to 2000

- Food behavioural studies show some interesting results; larger serving sizes, shorter distances to the food source, increased varieties within one food type and easy access (unwrapped versus wrapped candies) have been associated with increased food intakes
- Researchers at the National Bureau of Economic Research undertook a comparison of food consumption data from population surveys and showed a 268 kcal per day increase from the late 1970's to the mid 1990's, with most of this increase being accounted for by an over 100% increase in calories from snacks
- Even economists are studying food intake; one theory is the lower the economic value placed on food, the increased its consumption
- The physical activity side of energy balance has shown an equally unbalancing trend of diminished energy expenditure
- Individuals are doing less of their purposeful or everyday physical activities, a trend which can be accounted for by labour-saving technologies at home and work, transportation and the "built environment," that is, the design of neighbourhoods and how it determines physical activity
- Non-purposeful or structured activities, such as exercise programs and sports, can entail barriers of motivation, knowledge, access and cost
- Results from a recent study of physical activity levels reported by participants in the Canadian Community Health Survey (2001/02) demonstrate that most Canadians do not meet recommended physical activity levels; data on frequency and duration calculated in average daily minutes of most common activities showed activity levels of less than 15 minutes per day up to the 70th percentile of the sample of women studied; and men fared slightly better with 25 minutes of daily activity at the 80th percentile
- Given the diverse nature of food intake and energy expenditure, solutions to obesity must be multidisciplinary, involving efforts from the food industry, family and individual practices and public health policy, working in a collaborative manner to help combat the problem

THE OBESITY CONUNDRUM – FOOD AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE ENERGY BALANCE EQUATION

The Obesity Conundrum: Is There A Food Solution?

Dr. Eileen Kennedy, Professor, Columbia University, New York

- Food solutions to the obesity conundrum continue to be addressed in the scientific community not only to gain knowledge, but also to probe for solutions to the problem
- A recent summit sponsored by the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) convened experts in the field to investigate the reasons for the positive energy balance that is driving overweight and obesity, the apparent failing of biological mechanisms that have for centuries guarded against obesity and the role of food and drink in modulating energy balance
- Viewpoints on the factors associated with obesity remain consistent; obesity is a problem of a series of behavioural, biological (including appetite and satiety) and environmental factors, with consensus being that the rapid rise in overweight and obesity over the past 20 years cannot be explained by changes in the genome

- Observations on obesity as related to chronic disease (still from a perspective of behavioural, biological and environmental factors) include that education is protective, insulin and leptin are key in body weight regulation and energy consumption covertly increases as the energy density of foods increases
- Policy strategies to address obesity from WHO/FAO include taxes on foods, limits on advertising to children and banning certain foods; however, disagreement in policy solutions exists in the level of evidence needed for policy options and how to translate global strategies to country-specific solutions
- The economics of eating behaviour also play a role in any food solution; 40% of energy in the U.S. diet is from sugars and fats, which are cheaper sources of calories than fruits and vegetables
- The summit concluded that the prevention of obesity is critical, but the extent of lifestyle change that is needed (small, meal-based or larger, longer term) is unknown and identification of effective interventions is required
- There have not been many successful interventions to prevent overweight and obesity
- Gaps and questions are in the areas of: predictive biomarkers, both of obesity risk and for dietary compliance; behaviour modification to understand from the consumer perspective what drives their motivations and “real life” choices in food and lifestyle; and, communication and education to change behaviour by investigating the “hot buttons” for learning, with help from the marketing expertise of the private sector
- Food solutions also need to be assessed for whether weight control interventions can be achieved through food formulation, specific foods or combinations of foods
- All sectors agree on the need for integrated research efforts, including a clearinghouse for research outcomes together with the validation of successful interventions
- Such a clearinghouse could serve as the interface between regulatory agencies, industry and academia
- Concluding to capture the complexity of the obesity conundrum, “the big issue is to find ways to incorporate efficacious changes into transparent, sustainable actions within our everyday lives”

The Obesity Conundrum: Is There An Activity Solution?

**Dr. Carol Rodgers, Professor, Faculty of Physical Health and Education,
University of Toronto**

- Physical activity is fundamental to preventing disease; several studies consistently show a negative relationship between measures of physical activity and relative risk of death or all-cause mortality
- Physical activity is also linked to sedentary disease syndrome (SEDS), including obesity
- With specific reference to obesity, there is a higher chance of being overweight or obese with lower or sedentary physical activity levels (PALs) and obese individuals have a 50-100% increased risk of premature death from conditions such as coronary heart disease, cancer and diabetes
- Looking only at body weight is too simplistic; fitness level and fat distribution within the body are important factors
- Of note are the observations that obese or overweight, fit individuals are at lower risk of cardiovascular disease mortality compared to normal weight, unfit individuals, in addition to findings that increased waist circumference (a measure of abdominal fat) is associated with risk of coronary heart disease independent of BMI
- A key question is whether physical activity can be as effective as diet for weight loss

- Generally, exercise with or without weight loss has been shown to decrease abdominal adiposity in women and equal diet- or exercise-induced energy deficits have been shown to produce similar weight losses and decreases in waist circumference, yet exercise-induced weight loss is of fat mass, as opposed to diet-induced weight loss of fat-free mass
- Resistance exercise combined with some aerobic exercise also has the beneficial effect of fat loss with the maintenance of fat-free mass
- In determining the optimal dose of exercise for long-term weight loss, it is helpful to review the various definitions in the field: physical fitness is a measure of a person's ability to perform physical activities requiring endurance, strength and flexibility; exercise is defined as physical activity that is planned or structured; and, physical activity is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure, which can lead to improved health if practiced regularly
- Recommended activity is defined in terms of physical activity as the minimum amount of physical activity required for health benefits
- In 1995, the public health recommendation for physical activity from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) was the accumulation of at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days
- In light of the growing problem of obesity, in 2002 the U.S. Institute of Medicine (IOM) recognized that 30 minutes of activity per day is insufficient to maintain body weight in the recommended BMI range and recommended 60 minutes of daily moderate intensity physical activity, in addition to activities required by a sedentary lifestyle, to prevent weight gain and accrue weight independent health benefits of physical activity
- Similar to the U.S. recommendations, *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living* outlines one hour of any intensity physical activity daily, including 30 minutes of moderate activity four times per week and 20 minutes of vigorous activity four times per week
- Exercise goals for overweight and obese individuals should be combined with healthy changes to energy intake, and increases in physical activity should be first to adopt and maintain at least 150 minutes per week and then to increase activity level to at least 200 minutes per week
- Just as with food intake solutions to obesity, changes in physical activity need to be incorporated into an overall lifestyle approach
- In reality, despite the knowledge that physical activity has the positive health benefits of improved weight maintenance and reduced risk of chronic disease, physical inactivity levels in Canada are substantial, with over 60% of the population inactive
- Physical activity patterns in Canadian children are also disturbing
- There has been a decreasing trend in activity level in children from 1990 to 1998; in 2001, 16% of schools were actually providing daily physical activity
- Today, less than 30% of children engage in a level of physical activity that is essential for normal growth and development
- As concluded by the U.S. Surgeon General, "the major barrier to physical activity is the age in which we live"
- In a sense, populations have evolved to obesity due to several environmental factors such as driving, television and other technology-driven inactivity
- Some approaches to increasing physical activity include active living choices by individuals and political commitment from policy makers

STAKEHOLDERS IN ACTION – INDUSTRY, GOVERNMENT AND RESEARCH INITIATIVES

The Role Of Marketing In Addressing Obesity

**Dr. David Dunne, Professor, Joseph L. Rotman School of Management,
University of Toronto**

- Food is an advertising-driven business; six of the top 20 U.S. advertisers are food companies
- To address the role of food marketing in the obesity conundrum, it is helpful to look at two marketing practices that have been subject to recent controversy – advertising to children and marketing in schools
- Frequent exposure to marketing messages contributes to environments that predispose children to desire and consume certain foods is one viewpoint supported by research showing that preschool children are unable to differentiate between commercials and programs and that children need to understand how advertising works in order to be able to counter it
- Executive opinions rank advertising and/or media fourth after lifestyle choice and practice factors as contributing to childhood obesity
- And research on consumer socialization also supports that greater marketplace knowledge has contributed to advertising skepticism in adolescents
- The food industry in Canada is also heavily regulated on advertising to children
- From an economic and food technology perspective, it has become easy and inexpensive for marketers to give consumers extra value by providing more food
- Food and beverage manufacturers are addressing their role in various ways, including communication messages about the roles of physical activity and the host of other factors involved in overweight and obesity
- Several product changes are being made, including offering healthful menu choices, decreasing portion sizes and removing unhealthful components (trans fat)
- Some marketing and communication practices have also changed, including eliminating in-school marketing and establishing criteria for vending machine products
- Advocacy and dialogue with key stakeholders are important to the food industry; for example, with policy makers to ensure public policies encourage fitness and nutrition
- For the health and marketing communities to work together, it is helpful first to see how they differ: the health community works to make people healthy by targeting the public at large and their goal is public health for a better society; the marketing community works to make people happy by targeting various market segments depending on the product and their goal is return on investment (through consumer satisfaction) and thereby, competitive advantages and business survival
- For marketers, obesity is one of a host of other more demanding pressures that are part of the business climate, including mature markets, competition and new product failures
- While some strategies for interaction between the health and marketing communities include litigation and government lobbying for marketing restrictions, a more productive approach would be to work together to capitalize on the expertise of each sector
- The health community offers knowledge, research, influence and credibility; the marketing community offers innovation, consumer focus, communication expertise and monetary resources

- Some business challenges include the culture of abundance (in which it is tricky to communicate improvements by providing less), consumer tastes for sugar, fat and salt and resistance to price increases
- Yet the future also brings some opportunities; an aging population is more and more concerned about health, changes that are already underway by food marketers can expect to continue (especially in niche markets where there is the battle to be on the leading edge) and most consumers are aware of obesity
- In conclusion, food marketing has probably contributed to rising obesity, some food companies are concerned about the issue because of potential consumer and regulatory consequences and now is a good time for the health community and industry to work on joint solutions

The Food Industry In Action: Helping Canadians Lead Healthy Lives

**Ms. Robin Garrett, Vice President, Member Services and Communications,
Food and Consumer Products Manufacturers of Canada**

Ms. Cathy Loblaw, President and COO, Concerned Children's Advertisers

- The Canadian food and packaged goods industry is interested in helping Canadians lead healthy lives; industry member organizations such as the Food and Consumer Products Manufacturers of Canada (FCPMC) and Concerned Children's Advertisers (CCA) support initiatives with this goal in mind
- FCPMC members are committed to taking an active, leadership role in helping Canadians lead healthy lifestyles, including the promotion of healthy behaviours in children and youth to help them embrace an active lifestyle and consume a balanced diet
- Food companies are committed to making safe and healthful products and providing information about their products through labelling (nutrients, allergens) and other communication vehicles
- They also support reaching out to government and other stakeholders for collaborative efforts to help address healthy lifestyle solutions for Canadians
- For example, FCPMC has worked with Health Canada to develop nutrition labelling on foods, as well as several aspects of the *Healthy Living Strategy* and consultations to revise *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*; and, the organization has collaborated with on several education and communication programs on healthy eating and active living, including *Healthy Eating is in Store for You* (HESY)
- FCPMC has also been monitoring the obesity issue for several years and in early 2004, their CEO task force developed a proactive strategy with a three-pronged approach: industry commitment; member initiatives; and, a communications campaign
- The goal of the communications campaign, now under development, is to encourage positive behavioural changes through increased physical activity; part of this initiative is to identify programs to which the industry can dedicate their efforts and resources, and one such program is the "children's healthy active living program" now under development by CCA
- CCA is a non-profit organization that develops public service messages and programs that that speak directly to children, and supports parents and educators in the healthy development of Canadian children
- Member companies include several of Canada's major food and beverage manufacturers, toy companies and entertainment and communications or media corporations
- CCA's work is based on a model of shared social responsibility from member companies, broadcasters, the advertising production community, government and NGOs

- Media and life issues for children that CCA has addressed in the past include substance abuse prevention, self-esteem, bullying and media literacy
- Their newest initiative now under development and with a minimum three year commitment is the “children’s healthy active living program” (working title)
- This program addresses concern over the issue of obesity as it relates to preventable chronic diseases based on findings that examine the link between diet and physical activity; specifically, its objective is to encourage positive behavioural change to children through increased physical activity, healthier eating and improved media literacy
- The main component of the program will be a television campaign directed at children to be launched in the fall and supported by other communication programs
- CCA’s “children’s healthy active living program” is truly a collaborative effort with major food industry member companies and program partners, such as Health Canada, Dietitians of Canada, YMCA/YWCA, and many others all on board

Pan-Canadian Strategy For Healthy Living: Role of the Federal Government In Addressing Obesity

Mr. Claude Rocan, Director General, Centre for Healthy Human Development, PPHB, Health Canada

- Government is concerned about healthy living, including obesity, for Canadians
- The integrated pan-Canadian *Healthy Living Strategy* reflects renewed commitment from federal, provincial and territorial counterparts to health promotion and disease and injury prevention
- Announced in September 2002 by the Ministers of Health, this strategy was undertaken because non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and health disparities are among the major threats to population health in Canada, and their economic impacts are significant
- For example: preventable diseases related to diet and inactivity are associated with an estimated 20,000 to 47,000 premature deaths annually; they result in \$2.5 to \$4.6 billion in health care spending; and, are responsible for a \$5.3 to \$9.9 billion annual drain in the Canadian economy
- With specific reference to obesity, the statistics are equally alarming: approximately 47% of adult Canadians are overweight or obese; childhood overweight and obesity have doubled and tripled, respectively, between 1981 and 1996 in Canada; and, as estimated in 1998, 63% of Canadians aged 12 and over are not active enough to benefit their health
- The view is that obesity, physical inactivity and poor nutrition are poised to overtake tobacco use as the leading preventable cause of death in Canada
- Healthy living in its broadest sense reflects that people’s choices are influenced by their environment and includes conditions that create health, opportunity and access, knowledge and personal skills and living in healthy ways
- The healthy living approach espouses that coordinated, collaborative and integrated efforts are need to strengthen the impact of existing Canadian initiatives and address gaps in order to accomplish the goals of healthy living
- Integration is a key concept for the *Healthy Living Strategy* in order to have alignment among prevention efforts, effective strategies focussed on common goals and efficiency within the reality of limited resources
- The strategy framework includes a vision for healthy living, using a population-based approach with the aims of reducing health disparities and improving overall health conditions

- Existing areas of emphasis are tobacco, diabetes and chronic disease prevention
- The new area of emphasis is healthy eating, physical activity and their relationships to healthy weights
- In a second meeting in September 2003, several new activities were endorsed by the Health Ministers, including a key first step to establish an intersectoral healthy living network, which will be the driving force behind advancing the *Healthy Living Strategy*
- Current federal actions in support of healthy living include: forging strong links with provincial and territorial governments and other stakeholders; promoting evidence-based policies and standards, including Canada's nutrition recommendations and dietary guidelines; and, supporting the first Canadian Conference on Chronic Disease Prevention and Control and hosting the next WHO Global Forum on NCD Prevention and Control, both planned for November 2004
- Ultimately, the landscape for healthy living should be that healthy choices are easy choices for Canadians

Overview Of Criteria And Expectations For CIHR-Industry Initiatives: A Case Example Addressing Obesity

Dr. Diane Finegood, Scientific Director, Canadian Institutes of Health Research Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes

- A key part of the mandate of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is in the creation of new knowledge and its translation to improved health for Canadians
- As one of the 13 CIHR institutes, the Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes (INMD) has a broad mandate to support research in relation to diet, digestion and metabolism for a wide range of conditions associated with hormone, digestive system, kidney and liver function
- The significance of the obesity issue in Canada is reflected in the selection by INMD of obesity as its first and single-most priority for resource allocation
- Examples of existing INMD partnerships to address the problem of obesity include support of obesity research with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, and support of knowledge transfer through a project with the Canadian Association of Pediatric Health Centres to develop evidence-based recommendations for prevention and treatment of childhood obesity
- INMD has also supported with Statistics Canada the first joint Canadian/U.S. health survey; preliminary results of this survey provide evidence to confirm the assumption that obesity rates are lower Canada than in the United States
- One way to view the range of activities in obesity and health can be look at three broad areas: health research (by government, health charities, industry); health promotion (by government, health charities, NGOs, industry); and, sales marketing (by industry)
- Various linkings of the activities of these segments can result in better outcomes than from each area alone, for example: the intersection of health research and promotion can lead to identification of effective promotion strategies; or, the intersection of sales marketing with health promotion can lead to increased promotion and visibility, as opposed to the mixed messages that could result from each area working in isolation
- The linking of all three of these areas would be a challenging undertaking, but it could provide tremendous added value
- A program such as *Canada on the Move* (COTM) is one example for such collaboration
- COTM is a survey instrument designed to obtain information from Canadians about barriers and supports to increasing physical activity

- Executed as an interactive website, COTM provides Canadians with a place to record their daily activity and an opportunity to contribute to health research
- COTM represents a novel approach to engagement of the research community, and has resulted in several CIHR-funded research projects on the impact of COTM and other initiatives promoting physical activity; the program is a first collaboration for CIHR with the food industry
- Early communication results show significant media attention; questions included to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyles Research Institute's *Physical Activity Monitor* show increased awareness of pedometers and physical activity messages, as well as increased ownership of pedometers, when comparing the COTM pre- and post-launch periods
- The call to action message for "donating your steps to health research" that first appeared on cereal boxes has subsequently been distributed in some form by several other organizations
- Moving forward and for the long-term, commitment and resources will be required to sustain COTM and its intended health outcomes
- Discussions have recently been undertaken; some work-in-progress directions include a vision that COTM will have addressed coordination and integration among organizations and systems to provide value-added links among sectors and create an environment that supports and sustains physical activity and healthy eating in Canadians
- COTM is truly a unique model for collaboration, providing an infrastructure that transforms research, public health practice and the relationship between the two
- Challenges of such collaborations include cultural and organization differences, unique agendas and timelines
- Yet perhaps COTM or similar programs can serve as the anchor for an integrated approach to the healthy living landscape consisting of the non-profit sector, government policy makers, health care delivery organizations, individuals, the for-profit sector, researchers and community organizations

STAKEHOLDERS IN ACTION – A PANEL AND AUDIENCE DISCUSSION FOR VIEWPOINTS FROM ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FOOD AND HEALTH SECTORS

- A special part of the agenda for the Symposium on Obesity convened a panel of representatives from the Canadian Council on Food and Nutrition (CCFN), the Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS), CIHR, Dietitians of Canada (DC), FCPMC, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (H&SF) and the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA)
- This venue provided a unique opportunity to share and discuss with the audience how such organizations are involved in obesity, as well as foster ideas and avenues for intersectoral collaborations
- A promising place to start is the shared goal of all the organizations represented to support an active lifestyle and healthy eating in Canadians
- Depending on organization-specific mandates, such a goal is carried out in various ways, such as: research initiatives from CIHR and H&SF; education and communication programs from CPS, DC and OPHA; and participation in the policy development by DC and FCPMC
- However, all the organizations in some way touch upon all the various types of activities
- An intersection model focussing on the areas of participation in similar activities would leverage the expertise of all organizations to help address obesity in Canada

SETTING THE STAGE FOR FUTURE WORK (*i.e., with some of that work starting right away as the workshops on the next day; closing comments by Dr. Harvey Anderson*)

- Information presented at the Obesity Symposium demonstrated the complexity of the obesity issue
- Opportunities are evident for collaboration and partnership among the various sectors
- Further development of such opportunities can take place in smaller venues and group discussions to elaborate and provide specific recommendations for moving forward to help address obesity in Canada

SEEKING SOLUTIONS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS – OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- As an adjunct to the Obesity Symposium, a half-day workshop was held with a group of stakeholders representing various research, public health and food industry sectors
- Participants formed three smaller groups, which provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions on questions that were developed to facilitate the workshop
- Each group examined the same questions and then reconvened to report on and share findings with the group as a whole
- The following points have been reorganized¹ from the reports of the three groups and placed under the appropriate questions of the workshop:

How do we address obesity in a manner that is balanced and evidence-based?

- Awareness of the obesity problem is high; however, there is a gap in solutions
- Identify shared responsibilities for solutions, instead of focussing only on the crisis
- Engage the media to showcase the “good news” community stories
- Nutrition must be part of, but not solely the solution; the model is one of healthy living
- Prevention is the focus and requires evidence-based policy development
- There is the need for balanced communication guidelines that link energy expenditure and intake

Who is/should be committed to addressing the obesity issue? How do we engage the various sectors?

- Engage champions at every level, including federal, provincial and municipal governments
- Identify a healthy living champion who represents nutrition and physical activity
- Create opportunities for communication among researchers, practitioners and policy makers
- There is a need for an intersectoral advocacy strategy focussed on motivating political will and asking for real leadership within government for action on obesity
- Leadership must be within a coalition of key people identified as representatives from the different sectors
- The role of government lobbyists or strategists is to pressure for political will

¹ *Reorganized out of their group presentation, but remaining within the order they appeared in the wrap-up discussion; see appendix 1 for points maintaining the organization by group report*

- There is the need for a leadership organization that is multisectoral, with a mandate, money and accountability, including finance, environment, agriculture, transportation, education, municipalities
- There is the need for a nutrition alliance that represents the community with one voice and message

How can individuals and organizations with differentiated mission collaborate effectively?

- A suggested model entails three pillars – research, practitioners and policy – with the need to inform each other
- The new “Chief of Public Health Officer” could serve as the champion of healthy living and address the information-sharing and “traffic” among these three sectors
- Develop and publish an integrated proposal of recommendations with sign-off from the represented sectors
- A suggested organizational champion is the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA)
- The current state is one of stakeholder fragmentation in both resource allocation and advocacy
- A recommended action is to investigate the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada (CDPAC) for its potential role as a steering committee for the obesity issue

What are the key messages as an outcome of our discussions?

- To do nothing is not an option
- The public message is that there are consequences to children if no action is taken
- The message to politicians is to commit leadership on the issue, noting that: obesity will be more costly to ignore than to address; there are research gaps, and therefore, the need to assess what we do and do not know; and, the contributions currently being made by the various sectors must be shared
- The desired outcomes are mobilization of political will and a unified and consistent message
- **Paring down the** workshop discussion, the following four broad and common themes emerged; these areas can serve as a framework for taking action and promoting partnerships aimed at addressing the problem of obesity in Canada:
 1. Research is needed to better understand the nature of the problem and the effective means to prevent obesity
 2. Communication and integration among sectors
 3. A champion role or organization
 4. Political leadership

APPENDIX I – WORKSHOP REPORTS BY GROUP

Workshop group that presented first:

- Awareness of the obesity problem is high; however, there is a gap in solutions
- Identify shared responsibilities for solutions, instead of focussing only on the crisis
- Engage the media to showcase the “good news” community stories
- Engage champions at every level, including federal, provincial and municipal governments
- A suggested model entails three pillars – research, practitioners and policy – with the need to inform each other
- The new “Chief of Public Health Officer” could serve as the champion of healthy living and address the information-sharing and “traffic” among these three sectors
- Identify a healthy living champion who represents nutrition and physical activity
- Develop and publish an integrated proposal of recommendations with sign-off from the represented sectors
- Create opportunities for communication among researchers, practitioners and policy makers
- Nutrition must be part of, but not solely the solution; the model is one of healthy living

Workshop group that presented second:

- To do nothing is not an option
- There is a need for an intersectoral advocacy strategy focussed on motivating political will and asking for real leadership within government for action on obesity
- A suggested organizational champion is the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA)
- The public message is that there are consequences to children if no action is taken
- The message to politicians is to commit leadership on the issue, noting that: obesity will be more costly to ignore than to address; there are research gaps, and therefore, the need to assess what we do and do not know; and, the contributions currently being made by the various sectors must be shared
- Leadership must be within a coalition of key people identified as representatives from the different sectors
- The role of government lobbyists or strategists is to pressure for political will
- The desired outcomes are mobilization of political will and a unified and consistent message

Workshop group that presented third:

- There is the need for a leadership organization that is multisectoral, with a mandate, money and accountability, including finance, environment, agriculture, transportation, education, municipalities
- Prevention is the focus and requires evidence-based policy development
- There is the need for balanced communication guidelines that link energy expenditure and intake
- The current state is one of stakeholder fragmentation in both resource allocation and advocacy
- A recommended action is to investigate the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada (CDPAC) for its potential role as a steering committee for the obesity issue
- There is the need for a nutrition alliance that represents the community with one voice and message

APPENDIX II – LIST OF SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Symposium Program

Symposium on Obesity: Seeking Solutions through Partnerships

Monday June 14, 2004

University of Toronto Hotel/Residence, 89 Chestnut Street, Toronto, Ontario

Objective: To bring together members of the food industry, academics, public health practitioners, NGOs and policymakers to promote partnerships aimed at addressing obesity.

- 8:15 **Introduction and Welcome**
Dr. G. Harvey Anderson, Professor and Director, Program in Food Safety, Nutrition and Regulatory Affairs, Department of Nutritional Sciences, UofT
- 8:30 **Obesity in Canada: The Multifactorial Origins of Energy Imbalance**
Dr. Rena Mendelson, Professor, Ryerson University and UofT
- 9:15 **The Obesity Conundrum: Is there a Food Solution?**
Dr. Eileen Kennedy, Professor, Columbia University, New York
- 10:00 **The Obesity Conundrum: Is there an Activity Solution?**
Dr. Carol Rodgers, Professor, Faculty of Physical Education & Health, UofT
- 11:00 **The Role of Marketing in Addressing Obesity**
Dr. David Dunne, Professor, Joseph L. Rotman School of Management, UofT
- 11:45 **The Food Industry in Action: Helping Canadians Lead Healthy Active Lives**
Ms. Robin Garrett, Vice President, Member Services & Communications
Food & Consumer Products Manufacturers of Canada (FCPMC), Toronto
Ms. Cathy Loblaw, President and COO, Concerned Children's Advertisers
- 2:00 **Pan Canadian Strategy for Healthy Living: Role of the Federal Government in Addressing Obesity**
Mr. Claude Rocan, Director General, Centre for Healthy Human Development, Population and Public Health Branch, Health Canada, Ottawa
- 2:45 **Overview of Criteria and Expectations for CIHR-Industry Initiatives – A Case Example Addressing Obesity**
Dr. Diane Finegood, Scientific Director, Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes, Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- 3:45 **Panel – Stakeholders in Action**
Comprised of representatives of NGOs with a mandate to address obesity
- 4:30 **Closing Remarks**
Dr. Rena Mendelson and Dr. Harvey Anderson

APPENDIX III – PFSNRA INDUSTRY MEMBERS

Program in Food Safety, Nutrition and Regulatory Affairs

Industry Members 2003 – 2004

- CANADIAN SUGAR INSTITUTE
- EFFEM INC.
- GENERAL MILLS CANADA CORPORATION
- H.J. HEINZ COMPANY OF CANADA LTD.
- KELLOGG CANADA INC.
- KRAFT CANADA INC.
- MEAD JOHNSON NUTRITIONALS
- NESTLÉ CANADA INC.
- PEPSI QUAKER TROPICANA GATORADE CANADA
- UNILEVER CANADA