



## OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

October 15, 2007

Mr. Prime Minister:

We are sure you would agree that one of our society's main priorities must be to provide the conditions in which Canadian children and youth can grow up healthy. Unfortunately, in many important areas and determinants of child health, Canada is falling behind.

We know that:

- Canada ranks 18th of 26 nations ranked for death rates due unintentional injuries among children and youth
- 26% of Canadian children and adolescents are either obese or overweight
- About 15% of Canadian children and youth are living with some form of mental illness
- Aboriginal children face disproportionate and multi dimensional health risks compared to the general population in such areas as infant mortality, injuries, diabetes and obesity
- Canada is one of the only industrialized country without health goals or targets for children

Child and youth health in Canada is at a critical juncture. Poor health in the early years can place children on a damaging trajectory for the rest of their lives. Therefore it is vital that Canada focus its efforts on the significant health challenges faced by Canadian children and youth.

On behalf of the membership of our three organizations, which represent over 65,000 physicians and health professionals across the country, we are pleased to present you with *Canada's Child & Youth Health Charter*. This Charter represents the collective consensus of a broad spectrum of organizations and associations who came together recently with the objective of identifying the goals and actions required to improve child and youth health in Canada.

To reach their full potential, children need to grow up in a place where they can thrive — spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically and intellectually — and have access to high-quality health care when they need it. *The Child & Youth Health Charter* is a significant achievement because it provides governments with a clear vision and goals for improving child and youth health in Canada.

We believe all Canadian children and youth must have access to a safe and secure environment; good health and development, and a full range of health resources. We urge your government to adopt the *Charter* and deliver on its vision that Canada's children and youth will be among the healthiest in the world.

Sincerely,

Canadian Medical Association  
Canadian Paediatric Society  
College of Family Physicians

Cc: All Provincial Premiers & Territorial Leaders  
All Provincial & Territorial Health Ministers