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Regional Municipality of Peel
Office of the CAO
RECEIVED
AUG 13 2009
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August 5, 2009

Mr. Emil Kolb
Regional Chair
Region of Peel
10 Peel Centre Drive
Brampton, ON L6T 4B9

Subject: Menu board labelling

REFERRAL TO _____
RECOMMENDED _____
DIRECTION REQUIRED _____
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED

Dear Mr. Kolb

A report released by the Ontario Medical Association (OMA), earlier this year found that a quarter of Canadian children are overweight or obese and 75 per cent of obese children become obese adults. In addition, 60 per cent of Canadian adults are overweight or obese. Ontario's doctors first sounded the alarm on obesity in 2005 when it was revealed that this may be the first generation of children who will not outlive their parents. Unfortunately, not much has changed, which is why I am writing to you today.

As you may know, in April the OMA called on the provincial government to introduce legislation that would require calorie counts to be listed adjacent to the items on menus and menu boards at chain restaurants and school cafeterias across the province. Ontario's doctors believe this will not only provide consumers with the information they need to make healthier choices when they eat out, but that it is an important tool to help our children build healthy futures.

We were encouraged to learn that the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board will require their high school cafeterias to post the calorie counts of all menu items. We have written to all school boards in Ontario to strongly encourage them to follow Hamilton-Wentworth's lead but unfortunately, there has been no action yet from chain restaurants.

In the past, municipalities have played an important role in helping raise awareness of OMA initiatives aimed at protecting and improving the health of Ontarians. Most recently, a number of municipalities passed a council resolution in support of the OMA's call for provincial legislation banning smoking in cars carrying children, which became law earlier this year. The problem of obesity needs immediate action and we hope that you and your council will join us in the fight against this epidemic. A resolution of support passed by your council would be extremely helpful in our efforts to have this important piece of legislation introduced.

As a physician, I see patients everyday who want to lose weight to improve their health, but don't have the basic information to make healthier food decisions. Caloric labelling on menus is a simple and effective way to help patients make better choices for their own health.

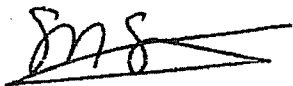
The concept of caloric labelling on menus is nothing new. In fact, 25 states in the US have implemented, passed or introduced legislation that would require calories to be listed on menus and menu boards and that number seems to be growing at a daily rate. In addition, menu board

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labelling is included in the US federal health care reform bill. Ontario has an opportunity to lead the way in Canada.

If you require any assistance, or background information, please contact my office for more information. On behalf of Ontario's doctors, your time and attention to this initiative is appreciated and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SJS', with a horizontal line drawn through it.

Suzanne Strasberg, MD
President, Ontario Medical Association