



Presentation to: City of Hamilton, Board of Health

Presentation date: Monday June 19, 2017

Presentation by: Rakhshan Kamran

Good afternoon, my name is Rakhshan Kamran and I am here today on behalf of the Canadian Cancer Society as a public issues volunteer.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about why reducing overconsumption of sugary drinks can have a major impact on body weight and why it's important to consider interventions to support this goal at all levels of government.

CCS is Canada's largest national health charity. We are dedicated to finding new and better ways to protect the health of Canadians, shrink cancer rates and reduce cancer's toll on our country.

As Canada's leading cause of death, cancer is the very definition of a nationwide health issue. About 2 in 5 Canadians will develop cancer in their lifetime, and about 1 in 4 Canadians will die of the disease. Cancer cases are projected to climb by almost 40% by 2030. In 2016, an estimated 29,000 people died of cancer in Ontario, and 77,700 new cases were diagnosed.

These statistics speak for themselves. More than ever governments- at all levels - need to take action to prevent cancer before it starts. We know that about one-third of all cancers can be prevented by eating well, being active and maintaining a healthy body weight. Besides not smoking, having a healthy body weight is one the best things Canadians can do to prevent cancer.

The Canadian Cancer Society is concerned about the health of residents in this city, and especially about the health of young people. Over the past 30 years, childhood obesity rates have tripled in Canada. In Ontario over 60% of adults and 27% of children and youth aged 2 to 17 are overweight or obese. From a cancer risk perspective, we are concerned because if children who are obese remain obese as adults, they are at increased risk for many chronic diseases, including cancer.

Obesity increases the risk of at least 11 different cancers including colorectal, breast, esophageal and uterine, so we need to act to put Ontario on the path to better health.

With sugar sweetened beverages, or sugary drinks, being the single largest contributors of sugar in the average Canadian diet, it is important to address this issue directly. The average total intake of sugar among Canadian adults is



approximately 110 grams per day. That is the equivalent of approximately 26 teaspoons or 21 per cent of total energy intake based on a 2,000 calorie-a-day diet.

The average Canadian youth drinks 578 ml of sugary drinks each day which can contain up to 16 teaspoons or 64 grams of sugar. This puts them well over the recommended daily sugar maximum of no more than 10% of total daily calories.

There is a link between obesity and an increased risk of cancer, but unfortunately the majority of Canadians (70%) are not aware of this link.

A recent study commissioned by Heart & Stroke, CCS, Diabetes Canada, Childhood Obesity Foundation and the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada looked at the impact of sugary drinks on our health and the healthcare system. This new research from the University of Waterloo estimates that over the next 25 years, sugary drink consumption will be responsible for:

- more than 3 million cases of obesity
- more than 100,000 cases of cancer
- almost 1 million cases of type 2 diabetes
- almost 300,000 cases of ischemic heart disease
- almost 40,000 strokes

It is projected to result in over 63,000 deaths and cost the healthcare system more than \$50 billion over the next 25 years. We cannot ignore these alarming numbers.

The causes of obesity are complex and encompass social, economic, physiological, environmental and political factors. Tackling obesity requires a comprehensive approach as no one policy option will solve the increasing incidence of overweight or obesity in Canada. This includes ensuring access to safe and free water, restricting food and beverage marketing to children, public education, better food labelling, revisions to *Canada's Food Guide*, modifying food environments to make the healthy choice the easy choice and implementing economic levers to make unhealthy choices less attractive and healthy choices more affordable including an excise levy on manufacturers of sugary drinks.

Finally, CCS would like to applaud your leadership in wanting to address this issue. Policies that create a supportive healthier environment can and need to be adopted by all levels of government. Today, you can be trailblazers in healthy eating.

- Hamilton can work towards limiting availability of sugary drinks at city-run facilities and continue to educate residents about the risks associated with sugary drink consumption through public awareness and education campaigns like Water Does Wonders campaign.
- Hamilton can demonstrate leadership by voluntarily complying with the Healthy Menu Choices Act. Listing calories and nutrition information on



menu boards is a powerful tool in giving consumers accurate information to make informed decisions.

- Hamilton can use its voice to support regulations restricting marketing to kids at the federal level including written support of the current federal legislation being discussed, and support of the Ottawa Principles with the Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition that calls for restrictions on all food and beverages to children and youth age 16 and younger.
- The city could also lend its support to provincial and federal campaigns supporting a sugary drink levy with proceeds going towards healthy living initiatives. This opportunity could include endorsing a call to action for the federal government to introduce a levy on manufacturers of sugary drinks in Canada. This call to action was launched in March by Heart & Stroke, CCS, Diabetes Canada, Childhood Obesity Foundation and the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada. It has been supported by over 20 other organizations nationwide including Middlesex London Health Unit and Elgin St. Thomas Public Health.

The promotion and adoption of policies that create a supportive healthier environment where we live, work and play is an approach that we at the Canadian Cancer Society support. Regulatory actions that are city wide and extending beyond city-run facilities would go a long way to creating a supportive and healthy food environment. These include restrictions on free refills, limiting size of sugary drinks and mandating water or milk as the default for kids' meals. These policies have been introduced elsewhere in the world. For example France banned free-refills and several US cities have mandated a default of water and milk for kids' meals). I urge you to consider these options and I thank you for your time and for your attention to this important health issue.

The Canadian Cancer Society is ready to continue to support you in your actions. Thank you for your time.