

# JOINT POSITION STATEMENT

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## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### JOINT CANADIAN NURSES ASSOCIATION AND THE COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS OF CANADA POSITION

The Canadian Nurses Association and The College of Family Physicians of Canada recognize the compelling scientific evidence that physical activity improves health and quality of life, as well as significantly reduces the risks of chronic disease, disability and premature death. We support the recommendations of the *Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines*,<sup>1</sup> which state:

Children and youth “should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily” and adults “should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.”

## BACKGROUND

Inactive Canadians are at greater risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, diabetes, some types of cancer and depression.<sup>2</sup> Chronic diseases cost the health system over \$90 billion annually in treatment and lost productivity.<sup>3</sup> One-third of Canadians have at least one chronic health condition.<sup>4</sup> These figures will likely increase, given that the number of Canadians over the age of 65 is expected to rise from 4.2 million in 2005 to 9.8 million by 2036.<sup>5</sup>

About one-quarter of Canadians between the ages of 2 and 17 are either overweight or obese, with 8 per cent being obese:<sup>6</sup>

- “Three out of five children and youth aged 5-17 are not active enough for optimal growth and development.”<sup>7</sup>
- Overweight children are more likely to remain overweight or become obese in adulthood, and are at greater risk for chronic disease and mental health problems.<sup>8</sup>
- Only seven per cent of young people attain the recommended daily level of physical activity.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, 2011, *Info Sheets: For Children 5-11 Years; For Youth 12-17 Years; For Adults 18-64 Years*)

<sup>2</sup> (Warburton, Nicol & Bredin, 2006)

<sup>3</sup> (Mirolla, 2004)

<sup>4</sup> (Health Council of Canada, 2007)

<sup>5</sup> (Statistics Canada, 2006)

<sup>6</sup> (Shields, 2005)

<sup>7</sup> (Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 1998, p. 6)

<sup>8</sup> (Wang, Ge & Popkin, 2003)

<sup>9</sup> (Statistics Canada, 2011)

Aboriginal Peoples demonstrate higher prevalence of being overweight and obese than the general Canadian population.<sup>10</sup>

Rates of obesity and being overweight among immigrants have been increasing steadily. It has been shown that immigrants who have lived in Canada for more than 30 years have a significantly greater prevalence rate for being overweight and obese (54.7 per cent) than the general population (45.3 per cent).<sup>11</sup>

*Approved by the CNA Board of Directors  
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<sup>10</sup> (Katzmarzyk, 2008)

<sup>11</sup> (Perez, 2002)

Wang, Y., Ge, K., & Popkin, B. M. (2003). Why do some overweight children remain overweight, whereas others do not? *Public Health Nutrition*, 6(6), 549-558.

Warburton, D. E. R., Nicol, C. W., & Bredin, S. S. D. (2006). Health benefits of physical activity: The evidence. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 174(6), 801-809.

**Replaces:**

*Joint CFPC/CNA Position Statement on Physical Activity*