

2012-01-16

The Hon. Leona Aglukkaq,  
Minister of Health,  
House of Commons, Parliament Buildings,  
Ottawa, ON, K1A0A6.

Dear Minister:

I write on behalf of the members of the National Council of Women of Canada [NCWC] to express our ongoing concern about the high levels of sodium being consumed by Canadians on a daily basis and the threat this poses to their health.

NCWC, founded in 1893, continues to be a voice for Canadian women on issues affecting their families, and their communities. Its membership includes 19 nationally organized societies, six Provincial Councils, 15 Local Councils as well as many individual members.

Excessive amounts of sodium in the diet can contribute to high blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney disease. The mean intake of sodium for most Canadians is estimated to be 3400 mg a day, more than double the 1500 mg believed to be an adequate daily intake. This is partly due to the amount of sodium in processed and packaged food, such as soup, bread, sauces and salad dressings.

The now disbanded Sodium Working Group recommended, among other things, a goal of lowering sodium intake by about one third by 2016. We strongly endorse that recommendation. Canada's Health Ministers, at the Halifax meeting, recognized the problem and focussed on ways to reduce the amount manufacturers are allowed to put in their products.

At its 2010 AGM the NCWC passed the following Resolution: " to urge your Government to take all necessary measures to follow the recommendations of the Sodium Reduction Strategy and ensure the Public Health Agency of Canada provides leadership in educating Canadians of the dangers of excessive sodium intake and develops a strategy and regulations for the reduction of sodium in processed foods".

We urge your Department to work with the provinces and territories to ensure that progress is made in this area as quickly as possible. We believe cutting sodium consumption will improve the health of the Canadian population and decrease cardiovascular disease, both important factors at a time of stretched financial resources.

Sincerely,

Denise Mattok,  
President NCWC.



Yours sincerely,

Denise Mattok  
President  
National Council of Women of Canada

