



**EXAMPLES OF CURRENT STRATEGIES BY
GOVERNMENTS**



Increasing physical activity: examples of policies and strategies from government

Governments at all levels in Canada have recognized the importance of physical activity in the lives of Canadians, whether it be from an economic perspective of reducing health care costs and insurance premiums, or to increase productivity of Canadian workers; a health perspective of combating chronic disease, obesity, and activity limitation; a social perspective of increasing active and healthy communities; or a combination of some or all of these. In order to reduce the public health burden among Canadians, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments initially set a five-year goal to reduce physical inactivity by 10% (6 percentage points) by 2003 and, based on progress to 2003, adopted a new goal to increase physical activity levels nationally and in each jurisdiction by 10 percentage points before the year 2010. Based initially on the 2003 goal, and fuelled by this new aggressive goal, federal, and provincial and territorial jurisdictions have implemented strategies to promote physical activity among their residents.

The following list provides examples of proposed and instituted strategies of the federal, provincial, and territorial governments. It is important to note that this summary is not intended to be a comprehensive list, but rather to briefly describe some initiatives being undertaken.

A multi-level commitment to a goal of increasing physical activity by 10 percentage points

The federal government and all provincial and territorial governments have committed to a goal of increasing physical activity rates among their populations by 10 percentage points by the year 2010. The means and strategies for accomplishing this goal are diverse among the 14 jurisdictions across the nation, yet there is agreement and a commitment of funds to accomplish several joint initiatives supported by work plans approved by Ministers across jurisdictions.

A commitment of increased funding for physical activity

The British Columbia government has committed to the doubling of dollars to their *Physical Fitness and Amateur Sport Fund* over the next four years, expanding it from \$22 million to \$44 million. This commitment on the part of the government represents the first increase to the budget for sport and physical activity in British Columbia in more than a decade (see <http://www.sport.gov.bc.ca/whatsnew.htm>).

The Nova Scotia government has increased resources allocated to their communities for projects aimed at increasing physical activity levels. They have allocated \$500,000 in physical activity grants. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available to organizations to create or expand physical activity opportunities for residents of Nova Scotia (see <http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20040625007>). Furthermore, the Nova Scotia government has focused its policy initiatives on health promotion as per its *2003 Blueprint* that outlines its political platform. The platform recommends the doubling of the Office of Health Promotion's budget, for which increasing physical activity is a key priority (see <http://www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/srd/publications/2004-2005OHPBusinessPlanApril22b.pdf>).

The Saskatchewan government has made a commitment of \$5 million from the Community Initiatives Fund. The financial contribution is the development of the *Saskatchewan in motion* program which focuses on increasing the level of physical activity among its residents (see www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca).

Many other provincial governments are also making financial contributions toward local and provincial level organizations involved in the planning, initiation, and ongoing operations of sport and recreation opportunities.

Framework and strategy development

The Northwest Territories is currently developing their *NWT Active Living Strategy* in an effort to increase physical activity among residents (web link currently not available at the time of printing).

The Saskatchewan government has developed its provincial strategy for increasing activity levels in Saskatchewan called “*A physically active Saskatchewan – A strategy to get Saskatchewan people in motion*”. This strategy was developed in collaboration with a variety of sectors. In 2002-2003, it developed an advocacy and advisory group to support this strategy (see <http://www.cyr.gov.sk.ca/index.cfm?page=36> and http://www.cyr.gov.sk.ca/assets/PDFs/PASS_2001.pdf).

The British Columbia government has held regional consultations throughout the province. The public consultation has formed the basis for the *British Columbia Policy on Sport and Physical Activity*, which constitutes the rationale for the provincial government's involvement in sport and physical activity and offers a framework that will shape future strategies, programs and initiatives (see <http://www.sport.gov.bc.ca/poldev.htm>).

Support promotion of national and collaborative physical activity initiatives

Many of the provinces and territories support and promote national and collaborative initiatives. Just to name a few:

Go for Green – *Go for Green* is a national non-profit, charitable organization encouraging Canadians to pursue healthy, outdoor physical activities while considering environmental issues (see www.goforgreen.ca). A few of *Go for Green*'s programs include *Active and Safe Routes to School*, *Active Transportation*, *Ice Dreams*, *Winter Green* and *Gardening for Life*.

SummerActive – *SummerActive* is a Federal-Provincial/Territorial initiative to increase awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. This promotion encourages groups and organizations to organize events at a local level that involve both active and less active people in physical activity during the six-week *SummerActive* period (see www.summeractive.canoe.ca).

Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Healthy Active Living – Health Canada, in collaboration with the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology developed and continues to disseminate these guidelines for physical activity for adults, older adults, and children and youth (see <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/paguide/intro.html>).

The Manitoba government has recently launched a website dedicated to *Healthy Living* with the goal of informing its residents and promoting physical activity. This website actively promotes the use of these materials and programs (see <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/>).

The government of Prince Edward Island actively promotes information to its residents, including the Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Healthy Active Living, the Canadian Health Network and Health Canada On-line (see <http://www.gov.pe.ca/infopei/index.php3?number=43157&lang=E&PHPSESSID=48222d693b4365605fa6bd540d7ffcea>).

Supporting physical activity in key settings

The government of Ontario supports the program *Active 2010*. *Active 2010* focuses on various settings, including communities, schools, workplaces, homes, the recreation system, the sport system and the health care system. *Active 2010* focus on these settings to “reach the greatest number of Ontarians in the course of their daily lives; communicate/reinforce the benefits of being more active; provide the support and encouragement people need to be more active; provide opportunities for people to be physically active; remove barriers to physical activity” (see <http://www.activeontario.org/english/index.cfm?fuseaction=Details.showAbout>).

Health Canada (Government of Canada) and the Canadian Council for Health and Active Living at Work launched the *Business Case for Active Living at Work* website in 2001, with a goal of promoting the benefits of physical activity in the workplace. It details research in the area, provides information on case studies and provides a template for workplaces to use in developing a business case for physical activity (see http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/fitness/work/introduction_e.html). They also launched the program *Stairway to Health*, to promote physical activity in the workplace (see <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspst/sth-evs/english/index.htm>).

A commitment to children and youth or school based initiatives

The Alberta government has introduced the *Daily Physical Activity Initiative* in schools to increase student activity levels and promote health behaviours. A minimum of 30 minutes of daily physical activity, linked to the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and attitudes promoted in the current physical education program, will become mandatory in Alberta schools in 2005 in Grades 1-9 and 2006 in Grades 10-12 (see <http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/ipr/DailyPhysAct.asp>).

In 2004, the Quebec government had established a contest/scholarship of \$64,000 called « École active 2004 » de Kino-Québec, in collaboration with the Fédération québécoise du sport étudiant, which offers financial support to schools in Quebec to organize a

project or purchase equipment (a committee selects the winning schools based on specific criteria) that integrate one of three courses of action. Essentially, the purpose is to increase physical activity in the school environment, through skill building and developing positive attitudes towards physical activity, increasing opportunities in physical education, and promoting safe, active commuting (see <http://www.kino-quebec.qc.ca/ecoleactive/index.asp>).

The British Columbia government has initiated *Action Schools! BC*, which is designed to help keep school kids physically active by “increasing opportunities for more children to be more active, more often during the school day” (see http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/nrm_news_releases/2003HLTH0014-000489-Attachment1.htm).

The New Brunswick government is currently involved in its *School Communities In ACTION!* program, which is a program to recognize physical activity in school, and encourage schools to implement and maintain such programming, including physical education and health (see <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/progs/sport/action-manual-e.pdf>).

The Nova Scotia government is currently involved in its *Active Kids, Healthy Kids* program which is a strategy for increasing physical activity among children, youth and families in the province (see <http://www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/srd/services/recreation.htm>).

The Ontario government supports *Active Schools*, which is a strategy to support schools to introduce or maintain physical activity programs for children and youth (see <http://www.activeontario.org/english/index.cfm?fuseaction=Sectors.showSchools>).

Supporting physical activity among aboriginal populations

Several provinces and territories have policies and strategies involving and supporting aboriginal physical activity. These include:

The government of the Northwest Territories supports aboriginal sport and recreation opportunities by supporting the *Arctic Winter Games*, *North American Indigenous Games*, *The Dene Games - Sahtu Region*, *The Mackenzie Dene Games - South Slave / North Slave / Deh Cho Regions*, and *The Northern Games - Inuvik Region* (see <http://www.maca.gov.nt.ca/sport/sport.html>).

The Nunavut government supports Arctic sporting and recreational events and activities leading up to the 2006 *Arctic Winter Games* (see <http://www.gov.nu.ca/cley/english/sports.htm>).

The Alberta government supports its Aboriginal Community through Alberta’s *Future Leaders Program*, *Arctic Winter Games*, and *North American Indigenous Games* (see <http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/asrpwf/aboriginals/index.asp>).