

September 19, 2024

DRAFT – To be approved by Board of Health

The Honourable Justin Trudeau
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The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
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The Honourable Mark Holland
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Standing Senate Committee on National Finance
nffn@sen.parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Minister of Health, House Leaders, and National Finance Committee,

Re: Support for Bills S-233 and C-223 “An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income”



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At its meeting held on September 19, 2024, the Board of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDHU) discussed and endorsed correspondence from Middlesex-London Health Unit urging the support of Bills S-233 and C-223 “An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income”, currently being considered by the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance and in the process of the second reading in the House of Commons.

The HKPRDHU has provided longstanding support for income-based solutions to reduce rates of poverty and household food insecurity. In the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District area, 8.7% of Northumberland households, 10.2% of Kawartha Lakes households, and 12.9% of Haliburton households, live in poverty and struggle to pay for rent, bills and healthy food [1].

When families cannot afford to buy the food they want and need to maintain good health, they are food insecure. Food insecurity is a symptom of poverty.

The health consequences of food insecurity and poverty incur significant costs to Canada’s publicly funded healthcare system. Adults in food insecure households are more likely to be diagnosed with a wide range of chronic conditions, including mental health disorders [2], higher stress and anxiety [3], non-communicable diseases [4], and infections [5]. Research also shows that children and teens in food insecure households are more likely to have poorer health, develop chronic conditions like asthma and develop mental health conditions such as depression, social anxiety and suicidal thoughts [6], [7], [8]. Food insecurity also makes it difficult to self-manage conditions through diet [9]. Research linking food insecurity data from population health surveys with administrative health records has provided strong evidence that food-insecure people are more likely to be hospitalized for a wide range of conditions, stay in hospital longer, more likely to be readmitted to hospital and die prematurely (before the age of 83) from all causes except cancer [10].

Inadequate income and household food insecurity result in poor health outcomes and higher healthcare costs. The Board of Health for HKPRDHU supports upstream income-based solutions such as



guaranteed livable basic income as essential components to effectively reduce poverty and household food insecurity.

We appreciate your consideration of this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF HEALTH FOR THE HALIBURTON, KAWARTHA,
PINE RIDGE DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

David Marshall, Board of Health Chair

DM:st

cc: MP Jamie Schmale
MP Philip Lawrence
City of Kawartha Lakes
Haliburton County
Northumberland County
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Public Health Association
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Standing Senate Committee on National Finance

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