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Charitable Registration
Number 11924 8771 RR0001

December 23, 2008

The Honourable James M. Flaherty
Minister of Finance
Department of Finance Canada
140 O'Connor Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5

Dear Mr. Flaherty:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) I am writing to add our support to the current consensus regarding the need to stimulate the Canadian economy, restore the vitality of the workforce in a way that positions Canadians to enjoy health and economic prosperity in the future.

Canada's non-profit sector is a significant part of the economy which should be duly recognized in the government's strategy to stimulate the economy. Each of the 161,000 non-profit organizations in Canada contributes economically, socially, culturally and environmentally to the quality of life in Canada. In particular, non-profit organizations in the health sector, such as OPHA, play a vital role in preventing diseases while protecting and promoting the health of the population as an indispensable pre-condition of productivity.

In this regard OPHA requests that as the government considers Keynesian strategies for stimulating the economy—investing in various infrastructure projects and developing the built environment—that appropriate emphasis be placed on projects that promote the health of the population. Investments in the creation of healthy, walkable urban centres, facilities that foster increased physical activity in communities, green energy strategies and other initiatives designed to promote the health of the population reduce future dependence on government for managing the escalating costs of health care. This has been a challenge in Canada for many years and the current economic climate presents a unique opportunity to address this challenge.

OPHA stands ready to assist the government in devising strategies for investing in public health so that the future vitality of the economy and the health of the population can be expeditiously achieved. We look forward to a stimulus package that respects and engages the potential of the entire non-profit community and emphasizes the value of public health as a net contributor to prosperity in Canada.

Sincerely,



President