

CANADIAN
NURSES
ASSOCIATION



ASSOCIATION DES
INFIRMIÈRES ET
INFIRMIERS DU CANADA

November 22, 2013

Re: Canada's health indicators vary from good to bad versus other OECD countries: report, November 21, 2013

More than 20,000 Canadians will die this year because of lung cancer — many linked to smoking rates in past decades. With obesity estimated at nearly 18 per cent for girls and 24 per cent for boys, are we now seeing this generation's lung cancer?

Obesity, high blood pressure, physical inactivity and high blood glucose rank among the top five risk factors for death in high-income countries according to the World Health Organization. Yet, just like smoking, the consequences of obesity are preventable. When nurses recently brought health leaders together to choose five priority health indicators Canada must improve its international ranking on in the immediate future, decreasing the prevalence of childhood obesity was among them. For registered nurses, this improvement means securing a place in schools and communities for health promotion, nutrition and physical activity interventions.

Too often people say, "If only we knew back then what we know today about smoking." Well, with obesity we do know. We know the toll it's taking on Canadians today, just as we know what will happen if we don't act now — health providers and citizens alike. It's not just hindsight that's 20/20.

Sincerely,

Barbara Mildon, RN, PhD, CHE, CCHN(C)
President