

Minister of State  
(Public Health)



Ministre d'État  
(Santé publique)

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9

May 17, 2005

The Board of Trustee Atkinson Charitable Foundation and  
the Honourable Roy J. Romanow  
c/o Charles E. Pascal  
1 Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ontario M5E 1E5

Dear Sirs and Madams :

Canadians are truly fortunate to have your leadership and that of the Atkinson Charitable Foundation in establishing a Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW). The management dictum, if it's measured it gets noticed, if it gets noticed it gets done, could not be more true in the areas of health and healthcare. For too long we have been focussed on measuring the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the dollars spent on the "sickness care system". By measuring indicators of health and determinants of health, like smog days and the percentage of families spending more than 50% of their income on rent, we can begin to reverse the focus. Canadians know they'd rather have clean air than more puffers and respirators, and healthy weights for our children rather than more dialysis machines to address the kidney failure from Type 2 diabetes.

The CIW project will enhance the work we are doing in establishing Public Health Goals for Canada. As you know, at their September 2004 meeting, Canada's First Ministers committed to a collaborative process to develop a Pan-Canadian Public Health Strategy, including the development of a set of public health goals. The Roundtable is an important step towards delivering on the commitment by Canada's First Ministers to: "...accelerate work on a pan-Canadian public health strategy [that will]... set goals and targets for improving the health status of Canadians through a collaborative process with experts." This was subsequently agreed to by federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Health. As a result, participating governments have agreed to engage stakeholders and citizens to identify broad directional public health goals for Canada. I am delighted to be co-leading this collaborative process with the Honourable Theresa Oswald, Minister of Healthy Living for Manitoba.

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This spring we convened a series of cross-country roundtable meetings on public health, as well as other consultative activities. The first part of the process includes consulting with stakeholders to identify public health goals. There will also be a citizen engagement initiative that allows Canadians to provide input via public fora, written questionnaires and a Web-based survey. A second part, tentatively scheduled for the autumn, will bring together stakeholders, Canadians and governments to validate the consultation results. The goals will provide a framework for each jurisdiction to establish targets that reflect their specific priorities.

We have established a Web site at [www.healthycanadians.ca](http://www.healthycanadians.ca) to facilitate participation in the process by individuals and organizations, and to report to Canadians on progress. An initial schedule of planned activities will be posted on the web site and updated regularly.

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing will be an extraordinary complement to the goals process in helping the transformative change to a focus on more *health* for Canadians ultimately requiring less *health care* and ensuring the sustainability of our cherished medicare.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carolyn Bennett".

Carolyn Bennett, P.C., M.P., M.D.