

# Let's Get Moving

**A Common Vision for increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living in Canada: Let's Get Moving**

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## Executive summary

The Common Vision - A Canada where all Canadians move more and sit less, more often.

Being physically active is key to good overall health and to preventing chronic disease. Levels of physical inactivity and sedentary living among Canadians are critical issues in Canada.

Never before has Canada had a singular policy focus on physical activity and its relationship to sport, recreation, health, and other relevant policy areas. The Common Vision is a new, collective way forward that will guide the country towards ways of increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living. It is a national policy document that is intended to move the country.\*

Informed and inspired by Indigenous perspectives, and input from many organizations and leaders, the Common Vision is for all that have a stake in promoting physical activity and reducing sedentary living in Canada. To make progress, bold, new steps must be taken together.

The Common Vision serves to complement and align with other relevant policies, strategies and frameworks.

## The Foundation: Physical activity for all

The Common Vision is guided by five interdependent principles that are foundational to increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living. They include **Physical Literacy, Life Course, Population Approach, Evidence-based and Emergent-focused and Motivations**.

### The Opportunities: Areas of focus

The Common Vision also includes a comprehensive set of six Areas of Focus for collaborative action - Cultural Norms, Spaces and Places, Public Engagement, Partnerships, Leadership and Learning, and Progress – that were identified through a comprehensive national consultation and engagement process. Each Area of Focus is further supported by strategic imperatives to help guide future planning and implementation. These strategic imperatives require collaboration and are outlined to help guide a collective approach to policies, planning, priorities and programming across Canada.

### Moving forward together

It is only through coordination and collaboration across sectors and orders of government that physical activity can be increased and sedentary living reduced at a population level. Working towards a Common Vision and shared outcomes, significant breakthroughs and progress can be achieved together.

Leadership is also essential to get the country to move more and sit less, more often. All governments can help build, broker and convene partners. Government departments and

agencies across policy domains; including those with responsibility for sport, recreation, health, infrastructure, culture, heritage, transportation, education and other policy areas can play a key role in setting the stage for success. Additionally, the Common Vision can contribute to addressing the relevant Calls to Action of the Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). To this end, the Common Vision identifies what organizations, communities, leaders and governments can do together, including roles for federal, provincial and territorial governments to lead on specific activities.

#### **What organizations, communities and leaders can do**

Promote, share and use the Common Vision, either alone or in partnership with others.

#### **What governments can do**

Build, broker and convene organizations, communities and leaders across all relevant policy domains.

#### **What governments, organizations, communities and leaders can do together**

ACT with accountability, coordination, collaboration and transparency to foster collective action around the Common Vision.

Let's Get Moving!

## **Introduction**

A Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada: Let's Get Moving is the first-ever call to action of its kind in Canada.

Never before has Canada had a singular policy focus on physical activity and its relationship to sport, recreation, health, as well as other relevant policy areas. What's more, this document also addresses the critical issue of sedentary living. It is a new, collective way forward that will guide the country towards ways of increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living in Canada. It is a national policy document that is intended to move the country.

## **The Common Vision: A Canada where all Canadians move more and sit less, more often.**

The Common Vision acknowledges that there exists a diversity of movements that are affected by health and mobility concerns, among other factors. A variety of movement can contribute to physical, emotional and cultural well-being.

This Common Vision is in response to a call for a pan-Canadian framework on physical activity by federal, provincial and territorial governments. It has been informed and inspired

by many organizations and leaders that have a stake in improving the conditions and addressing the many, interrelated factors that influence physical activity and sedentary living in Canada.

The Common Vision underscores that no one group, organization or order of government can make progress alone, but that bold new steps must be taken together. Supporting and enabling physical activity as well as reducing sedentary living are complex issues that require shared responsibility and action. That's because a complex and interacting system of factors contribute to increasing rates of physical inactivity and sedentary living – biological, behavioural, social, psychological, technological, environmental, economic and cultural – operating at all levels from the individual to the family to society as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

Like the chronic diseases that result from unhealthy behaviours, this complex and interacting system of factors is further complicated by a wide variety of policy decisions made in a number of different sectors that influence these behaviours. For example, Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015)<sup>2</sup> has documented the systemic barriers created for Indigenous peoples in Canada. The lasting effects of the residential school period and of other government policies<sup>3</sup> have created specific challenges for Indigenous individuals, families and communities to engaging in healthful physical activity. It will take both time and concerted effort to get Canada moving more and sitting less, more often.

This means all organizations, communities and leaders that have an interest in promoting and supporting physical activity in all its forms in Canada have a role to play – from the neighbourhood to the national level. The Common Vision must be implemented by complementary action plans developed by governments collectively and individually, bi-laterally and multi-laterally, and by non-governmental organizations and leaders.

The Common Vision is guided by five interdependent principles that are foundational to increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living. They include **Physical Literacy, Life Course, Population Approach, Evidence-based and Emergent-focused and Motivations**.

The Common Vision also includes a comprehensive set of six Areas of Focus for collaborative action – **Cultural Norms, Spaces and Places, Public Engagement, Partnerships, Leadership and Learning and Progress** – that were identified through a comprehensive national consultation and engagement process. Each Area of Focus is further supported by strategic imperatives to guide future planning and implementation. These strategic imperatives require collaborative attention and are outlined in Part III: The Opportunities to help guide a collective approach to policies, planning, priorities and programming across Canada.

More specifically, the strategic imperatives are for all organizations, communities and leaders. For example, municipal recreation leaders can work with city planners to create supportive **Spaces and Places**; non-profit leaders can leverage technology to drive **Public Engagement**; government policy leaders can work in **Partnership** with Indigenous peoples to co-develop culturally relevant physical activity opportunities; private sector professionals can contribute to new **Cultural Norms** by reducing sedentary behaviour in the workplace;

post-secondary institutions can help support **Leadership and Learning**; and, local volunteers whose efforts and results are shared can contribute to reporting on **Progress**.

It is only through coordination and collaboration across sectors and orders of government that physical activity can be increased and sedentary living reduced at a population level. Working towards a Common Vision and shared outcomes, significant breakthroughs and progress can be achieved together.

Leadership is also essential to get the country to move more and sit less, more often. All governments can help build, broker and convene partners. Government departments and agencies with a responsibility for sport, recreation, health, infrastructure, culture, heritage, transportation, education and other policy areas can play a key role in setting the stage for success. To this end, the Common Vision identifies what organizations, communities, leaders and governments can do together. Part IV: The Way Ahead Together also includes roles for federal, provincial and territorial governments to lead on specific activities.

Importantly, the Common Vision can also serve the goals and objectives of existing national, federal, provincial and territorial policies, strategies and frameworks on sport, physical activity, recreation and health including: Canadian Sport Policy 2012;<sup>4</sup> Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Well-being;<sup>5</sup> Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity Strategy and Change Agenda for Canada (2012);<sup>6</sup> Curbing Childhood Obesity: A Federal, Provincial and Territorial Framework for Action to Promote Healthy Weights (2010);<sup>7</sup> and Sport Canada's Policies on Aboriginal Peoples' Participation in Sport (2005),<sup>8</sup> Sport for Persons with a Disability (2006),<sup>9</sup> and Actively Engaged: A Policy on Sport for Women and Girls (2009).<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the Common Vision is informed by relevant Calls to Action of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015).

The Common Vision is not intended to replace or make these efforts redundant. Rather, its purpose is to align, amplify and help further promote these efforts. It builds on areas of convergence already identified across several of these independent efforts: adopting a life-course approach; improving access, equity and diversity; supporting physical literacy; encouraging play; advocating for supportive community design; improving volunteerism; and, reporting on progress.

The Common Vision is divided into four parts:

**Part I:** The Context – Physical Activity and Sedentary Living in Canada

**Part II:** The Foundation – Physical Activity for All

**Part III:** The Opportunities – Areas of Focus

**Part IV:** The Way Ahead – Moving Forward Together

Governments, communities, organizations and leaders can join together to empower shared leadership that will usher in a new era of active living and vitality that will result from promoting physical activity in all its forms while reducing time being sedentary. Only by successfully supporting all Canadians to move more and sit less, more often, will we move the entire country forward toward a healthier, happier and more active future.

Let's Get Moving!

## Building on our Strengths

Canada has a wealth of knowledge and know-how to build on as well as the experiences and expertise of other countries and international organizations to help move the country forward. The Common Vision draws on the tenets, proven approaches and learnings from other relevant sport, physical activity, recreation, health and related frameworks, strategies and reports.

### Physical activity, sport and recreation

- The 2010 Toronto Charter for Physical Activity: A Global Call for Action
- Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (2011), Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children and Youth (2011), Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth (2016), Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (2017)
- Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity Strategy and Change Agenda for Canada (2012)
- Canadian Sport Policy 2012
- Active Outdoor Play Consensus Statement (2015)
- Canada's Physical Literacy Consensus Statement (2015)
- Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Well-being
- Sport for Life – Long-Term Athlete Development Resource Paper 2.1 (2016)
- Informing The Future: The Canadian Infrastructure Report Card (2016)
- World Health Organization Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030 (2018)
- Physical Activity Strategy for the World Health Organization European Region (2016-2025)

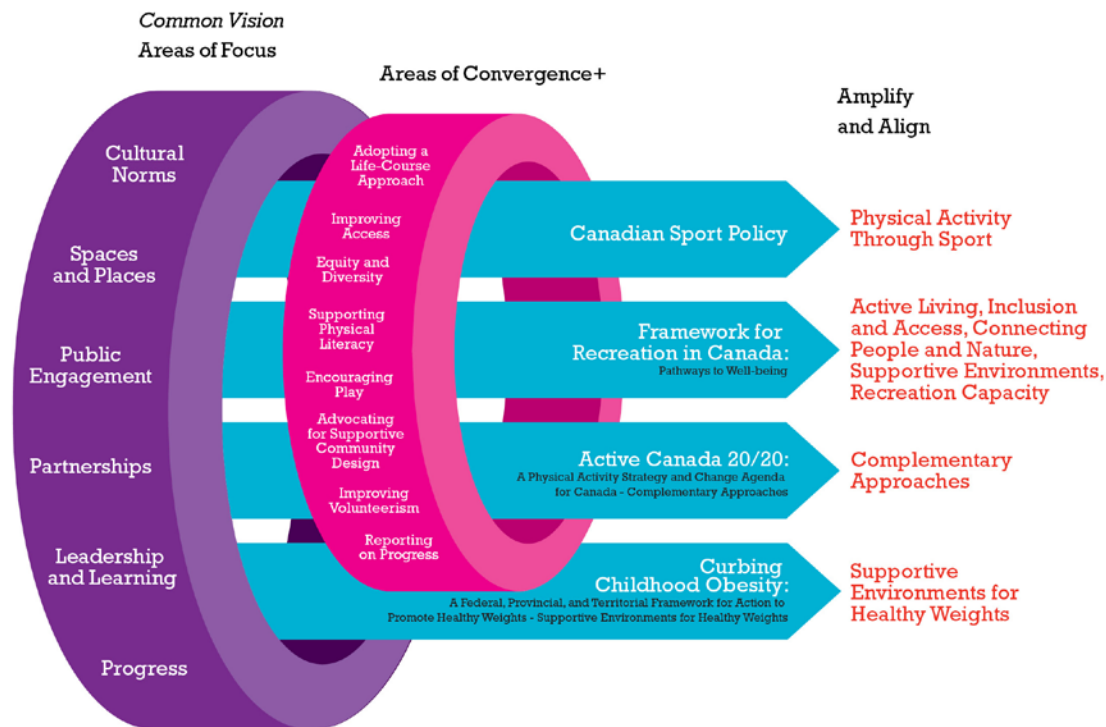
### Healthy living and health promotion

- Curbing Childhood Obesity: A Federal, Provincial and Territorial Framework for Action to Promote Healthy Weights (2010)
- Creating a Healthier Canada: Making Prevention a Priority, A Declaration on Prevention and Promotion (2010)
- World Health Organization Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Disease (2013-2020)
- Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion (2016)

### Additional foundational documents

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – Human Rights Treaty (1989)
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2008)
- Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015)

A Common Vision: Serving to complement and align with other relevant policies, strategies and frameworks



+ Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation.  
*Towards Alignment: A Collaborative Agenda for Recreation, Sport and Physical Activity in Canada, 2015.*

## Methodology: How the Common Vision was developed

The Common Vision is for all existing and potential organizations, communities, and leaders that have a stake in promoting physical activity and reducing sedentary living. As such, it is informed by and reflective of the ideas, insights and input of a variety of people who play a key role in advancing physical activity and reducing sedentary living for all Canadians.

- In developing A Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada: Let's Get Moving, the input of a wide array of stakeholders was considered from a wide range of sectors of society, including: individual Canadians; professionals; non-profit and private sectors; academia and researchers; and all orders of government across all provinces, territories and regions of Canada.
- Governments invited perspectives and insights from health, physical activity and sedentary behaviour, sport, recreation, infrastructure, transportation, heritage,



culture, education, environment, parks, and other sectors; private industry; and members of communities who may be facing barriers to participation (e.g., new Canadians; persons with disabilities; older adults; women and girls; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and Two-Spirit individuals (LGBTQI2-S); and those living in rural, remote and isolated regions).

- Robust consultation and engagement activities using public surveys, interactive webinars, a national consultation workshop and key informant interviews were undertaken.
- Focused outreach on issues facing municipalities, Indigenous on- and off-reserve communities, northern, rural and remote communities were also conducted.
- A Non-Governmental Review and Engagement Group was established to contribute to the review of the proposed direction and draft content through ParticipACTION, Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, Sport Matters Group, Sport Information Resource Centre and representatives of Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity Strategy and Change Agenda for Canada.
- A series of six content expert workshops were held. The workshops included experts from a wide range of sectors to inform content discussions on collaboration, physical environments, social environments, learning and leadership, social inclusion and diversity and public engagement.
- Informed by the consultation and engagement process and content expert workshops, the input was synthesized into six areas of focus. In addition, this input helped inform specific strategic imperatives for action within each of the six areas of focus.

## Acknowledgements

A Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada: Let's Get Moving was developed by the Federal Provincial and Territorial Physical Activity Framework Development Steering Committee on behalf of federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation. The Steering Committee is made up of sport, physical activity, recreation and health representatives from the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

A special thank you to the Conference Board of Canada for its management of the national consultation and engagement process and for the development of the reports: Developing a pan-Canadian physical activity framework: Consultation and Engagement Summary Report<sup>11</sup>, and Consultation and Engagement Addendum Report - Northern, Rural, Remote and/or Indigenous Perspectives, March 2017<sup>12</sup> that helped inform the Common Vision.

Appreciation is also expressed to all who shared their insights and perspectives in the consultation and engagement process; and to the leaders and networks of ParticipACTION, Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, Sport Matters Group, Sport Information Resource Centre, Aboriginal Sport Circle; and representatives of Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity Strategy and Change Agenda for Canada for their engagement and expertise.

## Part I: The context — Physical activity and sedentary living in Canada

Now more than ever, all Canadians need to be engaged and enabled to be more physically active and less sedentary on a regular basis.

Physical activity is one of the most basic human functions. It can happen at home, at school, at work, during leisure time and while getting from place to place. Historically, physical activity was incorporated into people's daily lives through physically demanding work, less reliance on automation and less dependency on automobiles. It was easier to be active because work, chores and daily living in general were more physically demanding. Furthermore, here in Canada, the lives of many Indigenous Peoples historically were based on holistic relationships to the land, where physical activities were part of everyday living and cultural orientation. This relationship was impacted by the historical effects stemming from government policies, such as those leading to displacement from their traditional territories, settlement on reserves, and residential schooling.

Today, physical activity has largely been designed out of our lives. What's more, many people think they have to go out of their way to be physically active – that it's something done only during leisure time, at a gym or on a sports field. It's important to acknowledge that the societal shift away from physical activity has taken decades; it will take time to reverse this trend and return to a more active society.

The result? Nearly half of Canadian adults are not physically active enough to benefit their health and well-being.<sup>13</sup> And increasingly, we are leading sedentary lives. We're spending too much time idle – lounging, watching, surfing online and playing video games. What's more, even those who manage to meet daily physical activity guidelines are too sedentary the rest of the day. Physical inactivity is now the fourth leading risk factor for premature death, after high blood pressure, smoking and diabetes.<sup>14</sup> And early research has found that sedentary living contributes to poor health and even premature death.<sup>15</sup> It was estimated that physical inactivity among adults cost the Canadian economy \$6.8 billion in 2009.<sup>16</sup>

Similar to physical activity, sedentary behaviour can be classified as occurring in leisure, occupational, household and transportation contexts.<sup>17</sup> Too much sedentary time can impact someone's health, regardless of how active they are. Canadian 24-hour movement guidelines underpin the relationship between physical activity, sedentary behaviour, and sleep; the latter acting as a protective factor for health.<sup>18</sup> For the purposes of the Common Vision, sedentary living refers to the accumulation of sedentary behaviours that occur throughout any given 24-hour period.

**Defining physical activity:** Any movement of the body produced by skeletal muscles that requires the expenditure of energy. It can include a range of movements throughout the day that can range from light intensity (1.5-4.0 Metabolic Equivalents of Task [MET- a physiological measure expressing the energy cost of physical activities] for children and youth and 1.5-3.0 METs for adults) to moderate (4.0-6.9 METs for children and youth and 3.0-5.9 METs for adults) to vigorous (7.0 or more METs for children and youth and 6.0 or

more METs for adults).<sup>19</sup> Examples include sport and recreational activities, taking the stairs at work, playing outside, walking to school, doing household chores, active commuting and land-based ways of being active by some Indigenous peoples, for example hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering and other activities that connect to the natural environment.

**Defining sport:** Participation in sport is defined by the four contexts identified in the Canadian Sport Policy (2012).<sup>4</sup>

- Introduction to sport – Acquiring the fundamental skills, knowledge, and attitudes to participate in organized and unorganized sport
- Recreational sport – Participating in sport for fun, health, social interaction and relaxation
- Competitive sport – The opportunity to systematically improve and measure performance against others in competition
- High performance sport – Participating at the highest levels of international competition

**Defining recreation:** The experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community well-being.<sup>5</sup>

**Defining sedentary behaviour:** Any waking behaviour characterized by an energy expenditure less than or equal to 1.5 METs. Sedentary behaviour relates to body posture, such as sitting or reclining, in addition to low energy expenditure and physical inactivity. Common behaviours that individuals typically engage in while sedentary include watching television, sitting at a desk or on a couch, driving to work, talking on the phone or reading a book.<sup>19</sup>

**Defining utilitarian physical activity:** Physical activity engaged in for the primary purpose of accomplishing work, chores, errands or travel; in accordance with one's cultural values and practices.<sup>20</sup>

## Demographic and societal considerations

Demographic and societal factors impact people's ability to engage in physical activity. Where they live, learn, work and play greatly influences their health. Personal choices and behaviours, including physical activity, are shaped by a range of social and economic factors, including income and social status, social support networks, education, employment/working conditions, social environments, physical environments, personal health practices, healthy child development, biology and genetic endowment, health services, gender, culture and more. All those involved with promoting physical activity need to consider these important factors.

### Seniors

- Recently released results from the 2016 Census show large increases in the number of Canadian seniors (those aged 65 and older). As of the 2016 Census, Canada now has more seniors (5.9 million) than children under 14 years (5.8 million).<sup>21</sup> It is expected that the population of seniors is projected to reach at least 10 million by 2036.<sup>22</sup>

## Immigrants

- Immigration plays an important role in Canada's demographics as immigrants make up approximately 22% of the Canadian population according to the 2016 Census.<sup>23</sup>
- Between 2011 and 2016, more than 1.2 million new immigrants had permanently settled in Canada.<sup>24</sup>

## Indigenous Peoples

- Indigenous Peoples in Canada face unique challenges. As the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (2015) attest, Indigenous communities are dealing with the lasting impacts of the intergenerational trauma resulting from colonization, alongside the loss of Indigenous culture, language, identity and infrastructural neglect.
- The erasure of culture, and unhealthy and crowded living conditions that often include food insecurity, have resulted in Indigenous children and youth reporting poorer health compared to non-Indigenous children and youth.<sup>25</sup> Also devastating are the many remote Indigenous communities that face an epidemic of youth suicide.
- The Indigenous population is growing much more rapidly than the general Canadian population. Between 2006 and 2016, the Indigenous population grew by more than 42.5%; which is more than four times the growth of the non-Indigenous population.<sup>23</sup>

## Physical health impairments

- Canadian adults who report often experiencing participation or activity limitations are 26% less likely to be moderately active than those who do not. Those who report moderate or severe functional health impairments are 23-33% less likely to be moderately active than those with no impairment.<sup>26</sup>

## Poverty or low income

- Poverty and economic inequality are increasing across the country. Rates of physical activity have been found to decline across income groups, with those in the lowest groups being 33% less likely to be moderately active than those in the highest income group.<sup>26</sup>
- Occupation can also have an impact on physical activity – those in “unskilled” occupations are 30% less likely to be moderately active, those in semi-skilled occupations are 22% less likely, those in technical/supervisory positions are 15% less likely, and those in managerial occupations are only 8% less likely to be moderately active than those in the professional category.<sup>26</sup>

## Changing built environments

- Over the last 50 years, the percentage of the population living in urban environments has shifted considerably. This presents both challenges and opportunities – an increased urban population could mean more congestion, traffic, noise, and air pollution.
- Many Indigenous, rural, remote, and northern communities continue to experience inequities in developed infrastructure.

There are significant opportunities for population-based initiatives that will increase physical activity and decrease sedentary living at every age and stage. Even slight gains among different groups of the population, such as Indigenous Peoples, would have a significant impact.

## Early years (Ages 0-4)

### Physical activity

Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines for the early years outline the right amounts of moving, sitting and sleeping that children aged four and under need for healthy growth and development.

- 13% of preschool-aged children (ages 3-4 years) met the Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines.<sup>27</sup>
- 62% of preschool-aged children (ages 3-4 years) met the physical activity recommendations of the 24-hour Movement Guidelines.<sup>27</sup>

## Children and youth (Ages 5-17)

### Physical activity levels

Not enough children and youth are meeting physical activity guidelines.

- 9.5% of children and youth (ages 5-17) are meeting the Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines.<sup>28</sup>
- 38% of children and youth get an average of 60 minutes moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day.<sup>28</sup>
- 49% of children accumulate three hours or less per week of active play outside of school.<sup>28</sup>
- 74% of Canadian parents reported that their children participated in sports in the last 12 months.<sup>29</sup>

### Comparison by gender

Large gaps persist between boys and girls.

- 26% of girls ages 5 to 17 average 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day vs. 48% of boys ages 5 to 17.<sup>28</sup>

### Changes in adolescence

The number of children and youth meeting physical activity guidelines drops as they enter adolescence.

- 48% of children ages 5 to 11 average 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day vs. 27% of youth ages 12 to 17 years.<sup>28</sup>

## Active transportation

Fewer kids are walking, biking, skating or scooting to school.

- In 2013/14, 26% of children and youth travelled actively as a main form of transportation to school. Rates of active transportation in 2009/10 were higher; with 32.5% of children walking or cycling to school.<sup>30</sup>
- Distance seems to play a role in active transportation. While 42% of kids with a 5-minute commute walk to school, the percentage drops to 28% for a “5-to-15-minute” commute.<sup>30</sup>
- For even the shortest trips of 5-minutes or less, only 3% of children and youth cycle to school.<sup>30</sup>

## Sedentary behaviour

Children and youth are exceeding sedentary behavior guidelines.

- 72% of children and youth exceed recommendations for recreational screen time: no more than two hours per day.<sup>28</sup>
- Children and youth are also spending approximately 8.4 hours of the waking day sedentary, the majority of which is spent at school, during the weekday.<sup>28</sup>

## Adults (ages 18+)

### Physical activity levels

Canadian adults are getting slightly more active, but are still not meeting the physical activity guidelines.

- 18% of Canadian adults are meeting the Canadian physical active guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week in bouts of 10 minutes or more.<sup>28</sup>
- 53% of adults reported being moderately active — this is an increase over levels seen a decade earlier.<sup>13</sup>

### Comparison by gender

Both men and women show gains in terms of doing moderate levels of activity. As Canadians reach adulthood, the physical activity gender gap declines.<sup>13</sup>

- 55% of men in 2013 (vs. 51% in 2003)<sup>13</sup>
- 51% of women in 2013 (vs. 46% in 2003)<sup>13</sup>

## Active transportation

- There is room to increase active transportation levels.
- Canadian adults report spending 1.9 hours per week using active ways to get places.<sup>31</sup>

## Sedentary behaviour

- Adults spend the vast majority of their waking day sedentary.
- Adults are, on average, 9.6 hours sedentary.<sup>28</sup>

## Older adults

### Physical activity levels

Older Canadians are still far below daily guidelines.

- 14% of older adults aged 65-79 are meeting the Canadian physical activity guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week in bouts of 10 minutes or more.<sup>28</sup>

### Active transportation

Use of active transportation decreases with age.

- Older adults aged 65-79 spend 1.5 hours per week using active ways to get places, significantly lower than the general adult population.<sup>31</sup>
- Adults 80+ spend even less time; less than 1 hour per week.<sup>31</sup>

## Sedentary behaviour

- Sedentary behaviour increases with age.
- Older adults spend 10.1 hours of their waking day sedentary. This is higher than the general adult population.<sup>28</sup>

## There are signs of progress

Over the past several years there has been national and international recognition of the health, social and economic impacts of physical inactivity and sedentary living, as well as efforts to address them. The efforts being made to help increase physical activity and reduce sedentary living have yielded some promising results. Examples include:

- The concept of **liveable cities** is transforming how we design our neighbourhoods. This includes how we think about our streets, how we promote outdoor activity, locating our amenities closer to home and ultimately creating vibrant communities.
- Municipal and community partners have been working to enhance the well-being of people for many decades by providing meaningful **recreational programs**. These programs help reduce barriers to participation and increase physical activity, as well as addressing healthy eating/nutrition, personal health and wellness, mental health, social inclusion and local needs.
- **Comprehensive school health** is a recognized approach to supporting improvements in students' educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic way. Actions address four distinct but inter-related components that comprise a comprehensive school health approach: social and physical environments; teaching and learning; policy; and partnerships and

services.<sup>32</sup> Through this whole-of-school model, physical activity is being supported throughout the school day, and not just during physical education class. This includes everything from how kids get to and from school to how they learn in class to what they do at recess. Essential to this is the incorporation of physical literacy to build the range of skills that children and youth need to make activity a life-long pursuit.

- Physical activity is being further **integrated into the health care system** through its professionals prescribing physical activity and offering practical and proactive advice. Health professionals are providing helpful physical activity and support that helps to prevent illness.
- **Quality “sport for all”** helps bring an element of fun and play to physical activity. It’s also a great role modeling opportunity for kids, adults and older adults alike – no matter the level of skill or ability.
- **Workplace wellness programs** have started to consider more active and less sedentary workplace strategies to improve employee health, wellness and productivity.

The successes of approaches like these and others prove that being more physically active and less sedentary can be an enjoyable experience that brings about a range of benefits.

## The more Canadians move, the more Canada will benefit.

Physical activity is associated with many benefits that accrue from activity in all its forms to Canadians on an individual, family, community and societal level across many sectors such as education, health, transportation and environment.

### Health benefits

- Prevents non-communicable chronic disease, including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, obesity, diabetes and certain forms of cancer
- Improves motor skills, muscle strength, cardiorespiratory fitness and bone health
- Maintains agility and functional independence
- Enhances mental health and well-being
- Helps to regulate sleep
- Spurs creativity and learning
- Reduces stress, anxiety and depression
- Improves decision making
- Provides specific benefits along the life course – from toddlers that are able to sleep better to older adults that can delay the onset of dementia
- Improves feelings of belonging
- Reduces anxiety and makes people feel happy
- Helps build confidence and positive self-esteem

### Social benefits

- Enhances social cohesion, positive identity formation, and reduces isolation
- Socializes children toward active lives



- Expanding access to facilities and public spaces can aid crime reduction by engaging youth in positive behaviours
- Community health and capacity

#### **Environmental benefits**

- Improves air quality and has a direct impact on the environment
- Active transportation reduces pollutants from motor vehicles
- Connection to nature

#### **Educational benefits**

- Enhances problem-solving skills
- Aids concentration, memory, learning and attention
- Impacts students' test scores and overall achievement

#### **Economic benefits**

- Reduces overall health care costs
- Increases productivity and lower absentee rates
- Creates economic advantages for businesses (e.g., developers, retailers), employers and employees
- Reduces community and parking costs - communities with active spaces and places improves tourism and attracts businesses

## Part II: The Foundation – Physical Activity For All

The Common Vision is guided by five interconnected and interrelated principles that inform each of the Areas of Focus and their related strategic imperatives outlined in Part III: The Opportunities.

Outlining these principles at the outset of this document, conveys how foundational they are to every strategic imperative in Part III - The Opportunities and the importance of shared leadership and collaborative and coordinated approaches as outlined in Part IV - The Way Ahead. More specifically, these guiding principles must be integrated into all actions within all jurisdictions and by all organizations and communities to ensure the success of the Common Vision.

**Physical literacy:** Physical literacy is the foundation for an active lifestyle and is a life-long journey. It is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.<sup>33</sup> Greater physical literacy results in more opportunities for physical activity. Like literacy and numeracy, the acquisition of movement skills early on is easier and lasts longer. Increasing physical literacy in the early stages of development, including through quality daily physical education in school, is key to achieving the goal of the Common Vision.

All governments, organizations, communities and leaders should view the Areas of Focus with a lens that will:

- Provide Canadians with education, experiences and opportunities to develop their physical literacy. The basic concepts of movement – like agility, balance, coordination, and speed (ABCs) are the building blocks to get Canadians moving more.
- Recognize and promote physical literacy as an essential part of childhood development, like numeracy and literacy.
- Advance across sectors and levels a unified vision for how to understand and enable physical literacy.
- Promote physical literacy education and knowledge development.
- Recognize that developing physical literacy, regardless of jurisdiction is a component of a quality physical education curriculum, and that a minimum of 30 minutes of quality daily physical education is required for students to learn the knowledge, skills, competencies and confidence for life-long movement.

**Life course:** A life course approach acknowledges that there are critical periods in early life when social and cognitive skills, habits, coping strategies, attitudes and values are more easily acquired. These early abilities and skills then shape a person's health in later life. It also underscores that there are defining life transitions – from late adolescence to early adulthood, for example – where risks can be disrupted and can alter life course trajectories and future health.<sup>34</sup>

All governments, organizations, communities and leaders should view the Areas of Focus with a lens that will:

- Recognize that Canadians need differing supports at different ages and stages to stay active.
- Encourage and enable Canadians of all ages in their efforts to be more physically active in all aspects of their daily living, and at all stages of their lives.

**Population approach:** To get all Canadians to move more and sit less, the interrelated conditions and factors that influence populations over the life course must be considered. These include the entire range of determinants of health – income and social status, social support networks, education, discrimination, employment/working conditions, social environments, physical environments, personal health practices, healthy child development, biology and genetic endowment, health services, gender and culture – that have been shown to be correlated with health status.<sup>35</sup> Increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living will require action to be directed at the entire population, or sub-population, rather than individuals, to achieve the goal of the Common Vision.

All governments, organizations, communities and leaders should view the Areas of Focus with a lens that will:

- Recognize the diverse population of Canada, including Indigenous peoples, and focus on the reduction in inequalities between population groups when it comes to opportunities to be physically active. This specifically requires being inclusive, equitable, affordable, culturally relevant and accessible for all groups including: new Canadians; persons with disabilities; older adults; women and girls; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQI2-S).
- Prioritize accessibility for all. This includes addressing barriers and improving access to physical activities and opportunities.
- Recognize the age-related demographic shift, immigration, urban expansion, depopulation, poverty, and income inequality.
- Take into account the diversity of geography in Canada that is characterized by both large, urban centres and small, local communities; northern, rural and remote areas; and Indigenous communities (including on-reserve) – many of which don't have facilities that support physical activity.
- Establish relationships and common understanding by providing opportunities for under-represented groups to be represented at the table and play an active role in making decisions.

**Evidence-based and emergent-focused:** Evidence-based decision making is required to identify priorities and strategies that will encourage and enable Canadians to move more and sit less, more often. While quantitative data is key to this, it is equally important to consider qualitative evidence that can help reveal underlying insights and ideas and human relationships that can build trust and understanding. Proven approaches can help inform future planning, but an important part of innovation is also the development of new sources of exploration and evidence that can help achieve the goal of the Common Vision.

All governments, organizations, communities and leaders should view the Areas of Focus with a lens that will:

- Be evidence-based at its core.

- Support the exploration of new and emerging approaches by engaging in intentional innovations that are showing early signs of success and that could bring about new evidence.
- Create opportunities for ways to include the principles of the Common Vision as part of early conversations and planning.

**Motivations:** While the Common Vision makes clear that systemic changes in the social and physical environments are needed to support more physical activity and less sedentary living, individual motivation is a key driver in being active. Motivations can fluctuate – they can change throughout one’s life, and they can differ depending on the activity. Motivation to being active can include improving health, reducing isolation, improving mental health, enhancing feelings of belonging and more. What’s more, for many Canadians, physical activity is fun and enjoyable and an integral part of their happiness and health. All these motivators are an important factor in the creation of the Common Vision.

All governments, organizations, communities and leaders should view the Areas of Focus with a lens that will:

- Take into consideration the individual aspirations of people who are motivated to be active beyond just a desire for physical health.
- Root programs, promotions and public engagement efforts in consumer insights about what Canadians want, not what organizations want to say or tell.
- Take into account an individual’s culture, values, beliefs and practices and how these impact one’s motivation.
- Consider the range of experiences that all Canadians, including Indigenous peoples, have with physical activity - from the pursuit of health and enjoyment, to cultural revitalization, to participation in sport at the highest competitive level.

## Part III: The opportunities — Areas of focus

The Common Vision: A Canada where all Canadians move more and sit less, more often.

To get all Canadians moving more and sitting less, more often, a multifaceted and interdependent approach to increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living must be adopted to help overcome the barriers. As a first step, this approach must include more than just sport, physical activity, recreation and health. Research makes it clear that physical activity is influenced by a complex, interrelated set of factors and conditions – both at the individual and societal level – most of which are not in the domain of sport and recreation policy and programs.

### Barriers to physical activity

#### Individual barriers (both perceived and experienced)

- Time constraints
- Financial constraints
- Enjoyment of physical activity

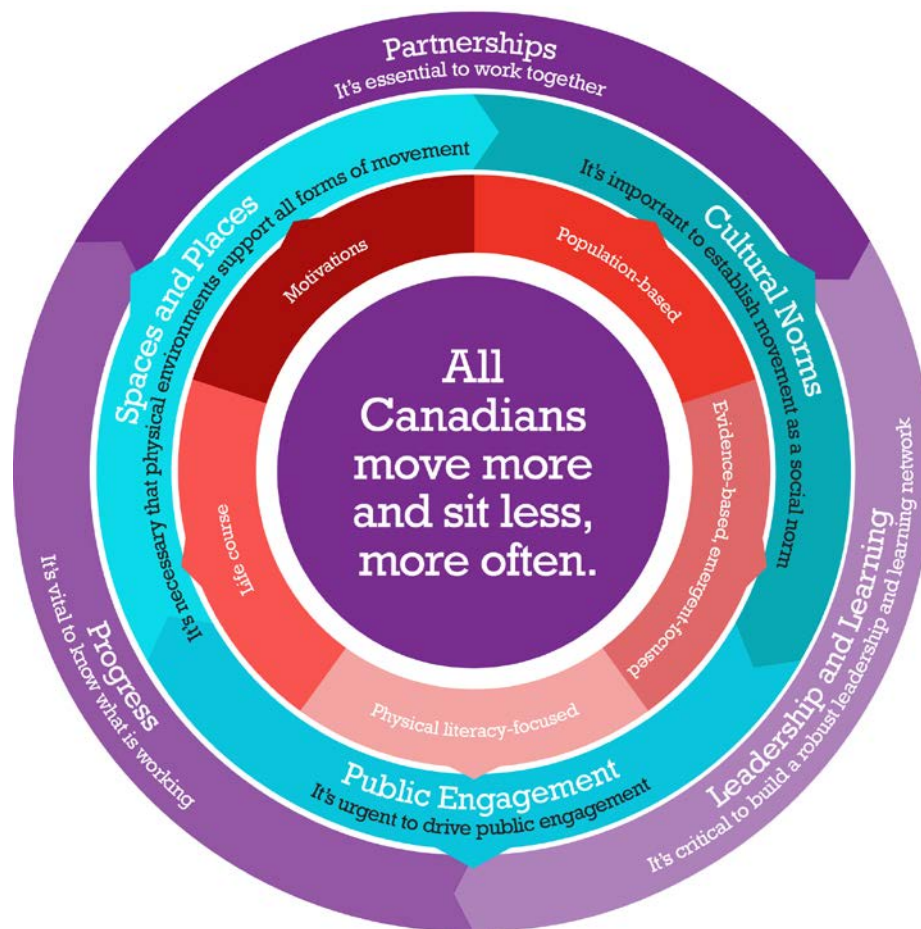
- Competing demands on energy
- Sense of self confidence
- Ability and skills
- Fatigue/stress from other responsibilities
- Illness/injury
- Feeling uncomfortable/embarrassed
- Lack of/poor role modeling
- Experience of trauma or crisis
- Cultural values and practices
- Safety concerns

### **Societal barriers**

Communities with a dispersed population can experience barriers to services and spaces to be active, such as those communities experiencing urban sprawl, in more rural or remote settings and in Indigenous communities (including on-reserves)

- Lack of active transportation infrastructure and related supports (e.g., dedicated bike lanes and storage)
- Lack of 'walkable' communities
- Lack of childcare
- Discrimination leading to exclusion and disengagement
- Long commute times
- Nature of occupation and workplace/station configuration
- Financial cost for registration and equipment
- Climate/environment challenges
- Lack of access to sufficient programs and/or facilities
- Diverse cultural norms
- Unsupportive policies and by-laws
- Lack of sufficient physical activity in and at schools
- Lack of qualified coaches, program leaders, physical and health educators, as well as early childhood educators/providers
- Lack of understanding of impacts of sedentary behaviour

To guide the country in taking bold new steps together to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary living in Canada, six Areas of Focus were identified and prioritized by stakeholders as part of a comprehensive consultation and engagement process. All organizations and leaders who have a stake in promoting physical activity and reducing sedentary living in Canada – from the neighbourhood to the national level – must participate. Collective action across all sectors will be necessary to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary living across Canada. Working toward a common vision, significant breakthroughs can be accomplished.



These Areas of Focus are grounded in the social ecological model for health promotion – a framework for understanding the factors that produce and maintain health and health-related issues that depicts interrelated systems at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, community and policy levels.<sup>36</sup>

Together, these Areas of Focus will play an interdependent role in Canada’s comprehensive approach to movement aimed at increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living. As a reminder, it is important to view each of these Areas of Focus with a lens on the key principles shared as outlined in Part II: The Foundation. The Areas of Focus include:

**Cultural norms and Spaces and places:** These two factors are interrelated and will contribute to social and physical environments that are more conducive to increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living. Cultural Norms involve establishing social values and beliefs that contribute to making physical activity the default choice. In addition, spaces and places work to ensure physical environments are more supportive and accessible for habitual physical activity to become a bigger part of our daily lives. For instance, in some Indigenous communities, the cultural importance of spaces and places is based on an understanding of the environment as a space for meaningful land-based physical activity.

**Public engagement:** An essential feature to increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living is enabling Canadians to know how and where to be active in ways that are more systematic and sustainable.

**Partnerships, leadership, and learning and progress:** Working collaboratively and forging partnerships will be essential to advancing physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour for all Canadians, as will building a robust leadership and learning network to guide the process. At the same time, the movement toward getting people to move more must accurately gauge progress to be able to understand what's working.

To support each Area of Focus, strategic imperatives were identified to provide direction on how to activate each of the six areas. The strategic imperatives serve as a call-to-action and are intended to contribute to a collaborative and coordinated approach to policies, planning, priorities and programming across the country.

The strategic imperatives are not programming suggestions. Rather they are guiding recommendations for everyone who has a stake in supporting physical activity and reducing sedentary living in Canada. These strategic imperatives can be used as inspiration for identifying the role they can play based on their unique strengths, abilities and assets, either alone or in partnership.

### **Ideas on how to use the strategic imperatives to inform specific programming recommendations:**

- For program specialists to share best practices with their peers to support **Progress**
- For municipal recreation leaders to work with community planners to create accessible and inclusive **Spaces and Places**
- For businesses to contribute to **Cultural Norms** with stand-up meetings as a way to change the social environment in the workplace
- For Indigenous leaders, educators and sports experts to strengthen Indigenous **Cultural Norms** that express the cultural value of physical activity practices in Indigenous communities
- For post-secondary institutions, education ministries, school boards, administrators and teachers to rethink how curricula is created and delivered as part of **Leadership and Learning**
- For non-profit policy professionals to leverage technology to drive **Public Engagement**
- For governments to work in **Partnership** with Indigenous leaders to realize the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report (2015)
- For policy makers to steward, broker and convene all orders of government to act on **all Areas of Focus**

## **#1. Cultural norms: It's important to establish movement as a social norm.**

### **The context**

It is vital to create cultural norms where habitual physical activity is part of the daily fabric of our lives. Fundamental to this is the establishment of social norms that support unstructured physical activity for all Canadians. For context, social norms are used to evaluate the social acceptability and appropriateness of one's own actions. As an example, unnecessarily taking the elevator has become the socially acceptable way to get from one floor to another.

Another example is driving around to find the closest parking spot possible. But what if this could change? Social norms can help reinforce more positive movement behaviour. Achievable physical activity norms include integrating inclusive activity breaks into work or school environments, taking the stairs, or parking at the back of the lot.

But this isn't about shaming inactive or sedentary behaviours. Rather it's about using social norms to help create new values and beliefs about all forms of movement that, in turn, help move people away from inactivity and sedentary living.

While new social norms can be facilitated by promotion and communication, there are many other strategies that must be applied interdependently – everything from healthy public policies to leveraging technology to quality programming to space design, and much more. And it needs to be acknowledged that places and spaces play a big part in supporting social norms; the “walkability” of neighbourhoods and communities is a key example. A holistic approach to establishing and enabling normative behaviours is required.

When active choices, like walking and standing more, are possible for the majority of Canadians, they can become the “popular” or default choices, and can foster a social movement.

## **1. Strategic Imperatives**

- 1.1 Shape public attitudes to make physical activity the fun and popular choice for all Canadians – inspire, facilitate and reward a cultural transformation that creates a movement of Canadians around both structured and unstructured physical activity throughout the course of the whole day.
- 1.2 Influence attitudes to overcome sedentary living by focusing on what to do (e.g., you don't have to be in a program with an instructor), where to do it (e.g., standing during a work meeting, in class, or in the stands at kid's events and games) and when to do it (e.g., workplaces where it is encouraged to walk at lunch or break).
- 1.3 Create a fundamental change to open up 'play' (e.g., overcome legal, technical, safety and social barriers that restrict free play) that will help give people the freedom and confidence to go outside and increase opportunities for self-directed, safe play in all outdoor settings - at home, at school, in child care, at work, in the community and nature.
- 1.4 Remove stigmas and stereotypes around letting children play outdoors alone (where parents may feel judged or labelled for letting children play on their own) by reinforcing that active, free play is “risky” but not always unsafe (e.g., kids recognize and can evaluate risk according to their own ability).
- 1.5 Change prevailing attitudes among many Canadians that physical activity is only a fair weather pursuit – embracing sport, recreation and physical activity in spring, summer, winter and fall is a Canadian trademark.
- 1.6 Inspire play over screen time (e.g., “unplug and play”) as a social norm, not only as a program or policy initiative.
- 1.7 Support quality physical activity experiences that are foundational early on in life, like quality daily physical education for all students in addition to daily movement in the classroom, and active modes of transportation to and from school.



1.8 Work with Indigenous partners to apply Indigenous perspectives to identify cultural-based values of physical activity and movement.

**Let's Get Moving – Some early ideas for how governments, organizations, communities and leaders can start to put these strategic imperatives into action:**

- Parents, educators and caregivers can encourage children to actively play outdoors in nature, even with all its adventures and risks. They can encourage children to regularly embrace the outdoors as a place to develop fundamental movement skills, socialize and be physically active. They can team up with education and childcare administrators to work with municipal and provincial/territorial governments and across sectors to examine policies, by-laws and insurance standards that have been known to act as barriers to healthy outdoor play that will never be entirely free of risk, but which is generally safe.
- Employers, human resource professionals, unions and health and safety providers can provide options to employees whose job primarily involves excessive sitting. They can offer modified equipment, such as standing desks, or modified meeting options, such as walking meetings, to replace traditional, sitting models. They can also provide other supportive changes for people who are predominantly sedentary while working. Supports can include bike racks or indoor storage areas for bikes so that employees can commute more actively; health spending accounts that can pay for a physical activity membership, fitness apparel, and/or team registration fees.
- Indigenous educators and schools can enhance cultural awareness through the development of land-based programs.
- Municipalities, service clubs, faith-based groups and volunteer associations can take into account the experiences of newcomers and bring their perspectives to bear on what it means to be active. They can encourage and support opportunities for new citizens to bring their ideas into play, on their own terms. They can invite ethnic and immigrant associations to host a day for others to try physical activities that are popular with new Canadians, such as cricket, bocce ball, table tennis, tai chi, lawn bowling, among others.

## **#2. Spaces and places: It's necessary that physical environments support all forms of movement.**

### **The context**

In the past, getting enough physical activity during the day was easier for Canadians. Most people were engaged in physically demanding tasks such as farming, industrial work and household chores as part of their occupation and daily responsibilities. For too many Canadians, physical activity has largely been designed out of their daily lives. Often, it has been relegated to a purely leisure-time pursuit.

The physical design of spaces and places plays a major role in encouraging and enabling Canadians to be active in their everyday lives. The built environment at the local level influences sport and recreational physical activity as well as utilitarian physical activity. Previous government policies for Indigenous peoples have impacted formerly strong and meaningful connections to spaces and places conducive to regular physical activity.

For sport and recreational physical activity, when things like paths, parks, green spaces and trails are accessible, people have safe and low-cost/no-cost options to be active. These opportunities are above and beyond dedicated recreation and sport fields and facilities. The good news is that there is much to build on already. For example, Canadian parks, gardens and playgrounds not only play a critical role in connecting and protecting our ecosystems but have also created tremendous opportunities to be active for hundreds of years. For utilitarian physical activity, opportunities can be built into people's daily routine by creating dedicated bike lanes so that people can actively commute to and from school and work, designing buildings so that the stairs are safe, accessible and inviting, and building schools where they are easily accessible through active means of transit (e.g., interconnected trail system or green spaces).

Supportive and sustainable physical environments that allow for sport and recreational physical activity, as well as utilitarian physical activity in other parts of our daily lives, are key to supporting movement and decreasing sedentary living. For utilitarian physical activity, this involves removing physical barriers so that habitual physical activity can be a part of the daily fabric of our lives.

## 2. Strategic Imperatives

2.1 Prioritize the design of spaces and places to increase recreational physical activity and utilitarian physical activity opportunities across all settings (e.g., communities, schools, public spaces, green spaces) while also increasing accessibility of existing facilities, venues and infrastructure.

2.2 Encourage planners and developers to bring key elements for increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living to the planning table, including: safety, quality, accessibility, ability, affordability, geography, seasonality, inclusivity and proximity to home/work/school.

2.3 Include wrap-around supports that need to exist to encourage and support participation (e.g., a new ice rink with bicycle/bus access or a new swimming pool with sufficient funding and training for appropriate staff).

2.4 Develop culturally relevant spaces and places for physical activity for Indigenous peoples, such as safe walkable communities (including on and off reserves, and in urban environments).

2.5 Leverage best practices of local, regional, national and international models of community transformation.

2.6 Review and support active transportation and transit solutions (e.g., integrated public transportation systems, enhancing bike routes, creating incentives for people to drive less) and encourage employers and schools to do the same (e.g., bike storage; incentives for transit; drop zones further away; and supporting flexible work hours, including during lighter traffic times).

2.7 Identify supports (e.g., equipment, procedures) to facilitate movement or standing options during time that is traditionally spent sedentary (e.g., during work and school hours).

Let's Get Moving – Some early ideas for how governments, organizations, communities and leaders can start to put these strategic imperatives into action:

- Recreation leaders, educators and volunteers can help parents or guardians play a more active role, or stand and be more physically active while attending their children's

recreational activities. They can do things such as installing rubber mats to make standing more comfortable, providing stationary bikes or walking maps for spectators in recreational facilities, and installing a walking track and/or linked and lighted pathways around fields to encourage walking while watching.

- Municipalities can re-examine by-laws and guidelines that prohibit safe, outdoor play on neighbourhood streets. This can include things like lifting bans on road hockey, skateboarding and winter tobogganing.
- Rural and remote community leaders have to be provided with the means to increase access to existing lands and public facilities to support physical activity. Shared efforts towards the re-establishment of a land base will greatly aid in the realization of these ideas. For Indigenous communities, this could include culturally relevant activities that make connections to the land, reinforce cultural identity, teach survival skills, promote holistic development of individuals and balance the physical, mental, emotional, cultural and spiritual aspects of Indigenous life.
- Schools can partner with community organizers through joint use agreements to increase community access to school sport and recreation facilities outside of school hours. This can include things like access by qualified sport and/or community recreation leaders to teach physical literacy skills not just to children at early stages of development, but also to adults and older adults who can benefit from access to physical literacy training or active recreation programs.
- Local businesses, Chambers of Commerce and community organizations can do more to support open streets programs that open streets to people while closing them to cars, in order to encourage more walking, cycling, and other kinds of movement. Open streets can be an effective way to engage under-represented groups who experience barriers in accessing local recreation and sports facilities or programs. Open streets encourage all forms of physical activity, and they bring local residents together.
- Municipalities and recreation leaders can offer neighbourhood multi-sport programming for physical activity that promotes the development of fundamental movement skills and increases physical activity using existing spaces and places such as trails, playgrounds and parks. To encourage participation, program staff should be present for supervision, the location should be accessible to all to eliminate barriers and the program should utilize existing infrastructure (e.g., community facilities or playground equipment).

### **#3. Public engagement: It's urgent to drive public engagement.**

#### **The context**

Canadians for the most part understand that physical activity is important to lifelong health and wellness. Over the past few decades, there has been much profile around the benefits of physical activity, as well as recent calls for Canadians to be less sedentary. There is a need to move beyond raising awareness to motivating action with systemic and sustained public engagement opportunities that enable all Canadians to get moving. This means that public engagement efforts can help more Canadians better understand how and where to be active.

A key element of this will be including Canadians in the co-production of public education campaigns where they can play a key role in creating programs that will work for them. New technologies can also play a key role here. Increasing public engagement can benefit from

embracing new technologies that further enable people, whether with ideas or tools, on how to be active.

### 3. Strategic imperatives

- 3.1 Adapt Canadian best practices in promoting physical activity, as well as learn from already successful community-based public engagement programs.
- 3.2 Create common public engagement campaigns, messages and programs that have national outreach but can be customized and delivered at the regional/local level (e.g., with an eye to maximizing coordination, minimizing messaging confusion and respecting the unique qualities of each region/community) to help create a national movement to mobilize Canadians to move more and sit less.
- 3.3 Create opportunities for Indigenous organizations to speak for and to advocate through public engagement on behalf of Indigenous communities.
- 3.4 Target individuals where they spend considerable amounts of time (e.g., home for families and schools for children, workplaces for employees, and homes for older adults), where they are on the physical activity spectrum (e.g., helping inactive Canadians become active, helping those that are active stay active), and with what is appropriate and accessible (e.g., using language that is inclusive and relevant).
- 3.5 Consider the social and financial barriers that impact participation in physical activity, and the conditions that contribute to sedentary living. This includes taking into consideration the stigmas, stereotypes, inequities and trauma under-represented groups often face in their efforts to be physically active.
- 3.6 Promote and disseminate Canadian guidelines to help inform people on daily recommended types of physical activity. This includes disseminating integrated 24-hour movement guidelines that clearly inform Canadians on limiting “sit time” and “screen time”, and that include daily recommendations for sleep time for Canadians.
- 3.7 Leverage and encourage emerging approaches (e.g., social finance, behavioural economics, social innovation, technology innovations, incentives) that are showing early signs of intentional innovation.

Let's Get Moving – Some early ideas for how governments, organizations, communities and leaders can start to put these strategic imperatives into action:

- Parents, caregivers and teachers, including health educators, can help kids strike the right balance between physical activity, sedentary behaviour and proper sleep. The Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth (aged 5-17) and Early Years (aged 0-4) are a world's first. They guide children and youth on the proper amounts of physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep over a 24-hour day.
- Organizations, health care providers and community leaders that encourage physical activity opportunities for prevention can emphasize that physical activity delivers a range of benefits beyond health (e.g., social benefits, improved mental health and resiliency).
- Municipalities, community organizations and leaders can engage underrepresented groups that face unique barriers to physical activity by tailoring messages and opportunities especially to them. This can include providing free or low-cost recreation

programs and subsidized transit passes to help those who face financial barriers to physical activity gain access to them.

- Organizations and leaders can reach out to clients and citizens to learn what they want and need to access and/or improve their physical activity experience. Questionnaires, online surveys and focus groups are just a few ways in which this information could be gathered. Community members can tell leaders what barriers they face and how to address them. For example, this could include transportation options for isolated individuals in both urban and rural communities.
- Environmental, education, and other leaders can use the infrastructure of local parks as hubs for community life and physical activity. Along with provincial and national parks' systems, they can offer free or low cost access to Canada's best and biggest playground - the outdoors. Parks, and Indigenous lands of great cultural and spiritual significance are places where people connect to nature. Parks, green spaces, community gardens and linked pathways facilitate physical activity, including free, unstructured play. They also encourage social contact and mental well-being, among many other benefits.
- Organizations and health promotion experts can use social media and other online technology to reach out and engage people. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and other platforms can provide a virtual meeting place to reach audiences while keeping in mind that traditional forms of outreach for those out of technology's reach may be the better approach. Wearable devices, healthy living apps and fitness trackers allow consumers to access and monitor their healthy living all in one place. While using online activity to engage people in physical activity may at first seem counter-intuitive, it can be the most effective way to reach them where they already spend much of their time: online.

#### **#4. Partnerships: It's essential to work together.**

##### **The context**

Increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living in Canada are complex issues. Many different elements can impact an individual's ability to be active – from health to wealth, from educational environments to employee settings, from spaces to places, from safety to skills, and more.

Multi-sectoral approaches involving all segments of society are required to achieve shared outcomes. For instance, promoting physical activity in a community involves many sectors and organizations such as transportation (e.g., introducing traffic calming measures), infrastructure (e.g., introducing better lighting), health care (e.g., emphasizing prevention), parks (e.g., maximizing park usage), community planning (e.g., improving walkability) and more. Much good work in these areas is underway at all levels in the country – but more and different partners need to come together. Through active engagement with the private sector; non-profit sector; child care, primary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions; organizations within and outside the sport, physical activity, recreation and health sector - as well as across all orders of government - more progress can be made.

Supporting and enabling physical activity in all its forms – from gardening to walking, to outdoor play, to active transportation, to high performance sport – is a shared responsibility. All organizations, communities, and leaders that have a stake in promoting physical activity and reducing sedentary living have a role to play, and only through working together can innovative breakthroughs and shared outcomes be achieved.

#### 4. Strategic imperatives

- 4.1 Give voice to the critical importance of collaboration and coordination – create expectations for and reinforce the value of working together to advance physical activity and reduce sedentary living.
- 4.2 Create a shared narrative for people to come together to advance physical activity and reduce sedentary living – especially for federal, provincial, territorial and municipal use when making the case for local collaboration and coordination.
- 4.3 Identify clear, shared outcomes and priorities across all sectors (e.g., health, education, community planning, infrastructure, transportation, culture, outdoor environment and other private sector domains) with a view to being action-oriented (e.g., identifying and acting on outputs and outcomes, agreeing on deadlines, focusing on accountability).
- 4.4 Support organizations and leaders in creating effective partnerships and collaborations. This includes exploring best practices in working with and engaging the private sector.
- 4.5 Adopt an approach to collaboration based on the unique strengths of all partners across sectors with clear roles, targets and deliverables that demonstrate both short and long-term progress.
- 4.6 Being inclusive of all Canadians also means collaborating on the Calls to Action resulting from the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). A unique opportunity exists to acknowledge the historical injustices and experiences of discrimination and address the needs of Indigenous peoples. Many Calls to Action specifically relate to sport, health and physical activity. The principles of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples can also inform an approach to Indigenous physical activity and health.
- 4.7 Facilitate communication and coordination within and across government departments to lever "whole of government" approaches. This includes establishing inter-departmental policies, (e.g., sport, recreation, health, education and "non-traditional" policy areas like infrastructure, transportation, heritage, environment) that are population-focused versus department-led. For example, those already in place between education in health in provinces and territories to advance comprehensive school health.
- 4.8 Strengthen partnerships between governments and health care administrators, doctors and other health practitioners that are focused on prevention and aim to address the "upstream" determinants of physical inactivity.
- 4.9 Coordinate and align relevant policies, strategies and frameworks in sport, physical activity, recreation and healthy living.

Let's Get Moving – Some early ideas for how governments, organizations, communities and leaders can start to put these strategic imperatives into action:

- Using a comprehensive school health approach, school boards and schools can work with local health authorities and recreation leaders to bring physical activity opportunities, including initiatives that promote the development of physical literacy, to children and youth before and after school. Giving children the solid foundation of skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to participate with confidence in a wide variety of physical activities at the earliest stages of development can be achieved more successfully through partnerships.
- After school programs for children and youth of new Canadian families can also focus on culturally relevant knowledge and approaches to instruction that can be included in the physical activity programming.
- Recreation and physical activity leaders or volunteers can work with the community to create culturally-appropriate physical activity opportunities. An example of this could be facilitating Indigenous land-based activities. Hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering were once life sustaining activities for Indigenous Peoples throughout Canada and remain important in some areas. The physical activity benefits of these activities can be significant.
- Healthcare professionals, organizations, and Elders in Indigenous communities that work with older adults (at senior centres, community leagues, friendship centres, etc.) can educate and promote the importance of daily physical activity for social, cognitive cultural, and emotional benefits, reduction and prevention of falls, and prevention of disease in general. They can also work with physical activity providers and municipalities to connect their clients to accessible, quality physical activity programming in their community that helps develop movement skills.
- People in the private sector can work with non-profit organizations and governments to create multi-sectoral partnerships that leverage and bring new resources, skills and innovation to physical activity.
- Communities and residents can work with persons living with physical, intellectual, sensory, behavioural, developmental, and other disabilities - and those experiencing other challenges, including mental health problems and illnesses, to address barriers to physical activity.

## **#5. Leadership and learning: It's critical to build a robust leadership and learning network to help build capacity.**

### **The context**

The term “physical activity sector” is often used to refer to the many organizations and leaders working in sport, recreation and health across Canada that play either a direct or indirect role to promote physical activity. It is essential that leaders and volunteers have the capacity, credentials, competencies and cultural sensitivities, as well as awareness of Indigenous history, to do this important work – from national to local leaders and providers. The quality of sport, recreation, health or other organized physical activity programs can impact individuals, and high-quality, engaging experiences can have lasting positive effects for life. Outside of organized programs, other leaders also need similar supports.

At the same time, it is also critical to build capacity beyond the traditional physical activity sector. The circle of influence must be expanded to include all interested organizations and leaders across sectors. While leadership to promote physical activity can be found within existing sector partners, efforts to build more capacity outside of sport, recreation, health and education are needed. These can include leaders working in urban planning, transportation, infrastructure, environment, immigration, culture, heritage and other areas.

In particular, the capacity of those on the “front lines” must be supported and strengthened. Volunteers are in many cases the backbone of both organized and unorganized physical activity opportunities. Improving supports available to set volunteers up for success is essential to setting Canadians up for success.

## 5. Strategic imperatives

- 5.1 Encourage post-secondary education curriculum to ensure that all pre-service teacher training programs have required health education and physical activity courses as graduation requirements.
- 5.2 Encourage the education system to take a leadership role in enhancing physical activity opportunities across the school day, including by increasing quality physical education time, and by decreasing sedentary time for children and youth.
- 5.3 Consider more formalized curriculum and professional development milestones (e.g., physical activity practitioner certification, continuing education). This includes sector reform to grow the circle of sector engagement with professionals from other disciplines (e.g., mental health, nutrition), certification standards that take into account but also build on existing certification programs and qualifications (e.g., best practices for inclusion) and ethical standards for physical activity professionals.
- 5.4 Include culturally relevant curriculum content and instructional methods that create awareness of the history and experience of Indigenous people, and others, in Canada.
- 5.5 Steer practitioners to best practices in training and professional development, including tools, programs and resources (e.g., after school activities program, play in sport programs, culturally relevant physical activity programs). This includes increasing opportunities to build knowledge on overcoming the barriers to physical activity and ways to minimize sedentary behaviours for all ages and abilities.
- 5.6 Help communities that rely on volunteers (as well as those that have volunteer capacity issues or face high turn-over of volunteers/coaches/programmers) find meaningful solutions to source and support them so that quality programming is consistent and reliable.

Let’s Get Moving – Some early ideas for how governments, organizations, communities and leaders can start to put these strategic imperatives into action:

- Post-secondary institutions can enhance the curriculum and training for engineers and community planners to include physical activity as a principle in the design of buildings and neighbourhoods, such as designing staircases so that they are prominent, visible, inviting and safe. Curriculum and training can also be provided that involves accessibility to spaces for a variety of users (e.g., making curbsides and entrance ways universally accessible for wheelchairs, strollers and walkers, providing elevators in multi-floor units,



contrasting baseboards, and creating physical activity spaces for all users to navigate comfortably and safely).

- School boards, administrators, and teacher associations can include the ways and means of incorporating increased physical activity and reduced sedentary behaviour among students and staff during the school day and professional development opportunities related to physical literacy for teachers.
- The Great Trail (formerly The Trans Canada Trail) is the longest recreational trail in the world, and it offers a wide range of physical activities through a variety of landscapes: urban, rural and wilderness. The Great Trail was built through leadership expressed across the country from non-profits and private industry right through the municipal, provincial/territorial and federal orders of government.
- Grassroots community leaders and groups can provide opportunities for people to become physically active by engaging with members of their communities. An example is “meet-up” groups that use social media to connect with others to meet at a specific public location for group physical activity.
- Elders and other leaders can provide traditional knowledge and cultural teachings to successfully design and deliver land-based programs for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth.
- Health care professionals can help their patients access no-cost or low-cost physical activity opportunities in their community. Health care professionals are often the first point of contact when their patients are sick or visiting for their annual check-up. Encouraging physical activity for illness prevention, stress reduction or as part of physical rehabilitation are just a few examples.
- Schools, early child education centres, Indigenous friendship centres, accessibility centres, community volunteers and others can look to the many approaches and models for leadership and learning that already exist. These models can be adapted and incorporated where appropriate. Within sport there are numerous models that encourage life-long learning such as Active for Life or embrace the long term development of the participant/athlete. This model also incorporates gender equity, accessibility, socio-economic inclusion and cultural inclusion. Other models that embrace a similar range of important leadership issues should also be considered.

## **#6. Progress: It’s vital to know what is working.**

### **The context**

In areas that require us to monitor and report on progress, Canada has a lot of good work underway across the country. Canada can be a world leader in monitoring, assessing, reporting and bringing forward new evidence about how physical activity and sedentary living impact our lives. There are many initiatives and tools to build on, such as: existing efforts by federal, provincial and territorial government efforts to monitor and report on population physical activity that are already informing policies to curb overweight and obesity; and tools like the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines, Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines, Sport for Life Model, Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth and for Early Years, the ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, and more.

A challenge will be to effectively share and use existing tools and methods that facilitate this work, and that allow a better understanding of what is and isn't working. We can build on successes, fine tune areas of opportunity and continue to improve monitoring and reporting of new strategies and solutions. Approaches need to strive to inform a comprehensive assessment of the complexity of the system factors that support or hinder physical activity and sedentary living for all Canadians. Building on and improving reporting, monitoring and evaluation will play a key role here.

## 6. Strategic imperatives

- 6.1 Prioritize and share baseline data at the national, provincial, regional and community level that incorporates the full spectrum of physical activity in all its forms. Equally important is building on baseline data to inform actions to combat sedentary living.
- 6.2 Improve data gathering and monitoring tools and systems at the national, provincial, regional and community level in ways that respond to emerging evidence.
- 6.3 Work with Indigenous partners to raise awareness and understanding of the protocols required to undertake research involving Indigenous communities and organizations, and to develop relevant research methods for carrying out that research.
- 6.4 Focus on performance measurement and its relationship across settings (e.g., schools, parks, workplaces) and sectors.
- 6.5 Promote better alignment of research resources and outcomes.
- 6.6 Coordinate and facilitate sharing of knowledge and best practices between practitioners, policy makers and researchers, including the underlying processes and tools used to identify these practices.
- 6.7 Develop a joint process for tracking progress towards shared outcomes, including community-level indicators.
- 6.8 Prioritize long-term strategic and coordinated investments, knowledge sharing, as well as reporting, monitoring and evaluation.
- 6.9 Increase evaluation capacity of physical activity providers (e.g., helping practitioners assess learning so they understand how assessment can both feed evaluation and learning).

Let's Get Moving – Some early ideas for how governments, organizations, communities and leaders can start to put these strategic imperatives into action:

- Municipalities, engineers and community planners can use Geographic Information System (GIS) tools to reveal trends and detect weaknesses in walkability and access to recreation facilities and the use of green spaces in communities.
- School boards, administrators and other programs delivered can monitor the quality of physical activity programming and time spent being sedentary to ensure developmentally and culturally appropriate experiences, and that they include sufficient moderate-to-vigorous physical activity in accordance with national movement guidelines.
- Municipalities and researchers can work with community and recreation leaders to monitor parks, fields and playgrounds to determine how best to activate these places and spaces.

- Community groups can use evidence-based checklists and self-assessment tools (e.g., Photovoice) to help assess physical activity opportunities and barriers in neighbourhoods.
- Governments, academics and researchers can work together, and in collaboration with relevant partners, such as Indigenous organizations, to identify and leverage data collection activities so that planning can be more informed and outcomes can be more monitored across multiple sectors, such as education, environment, urban and landscape design, transportation, health and others. Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous organizations need to be involved in the research process.
- Recreation facilities can audit accessibility and improve access to their facilities where appropriate. For example, an accessibility audit can be conducted to ensure access for persons with disabilities. In addition, opportunities can be provided for underrepresented groups to be engaged and to play an active role in making decisions on what will better serve the needs of all community residents. This approach is sometimes called “Nothing About Me, Without Me” meaning key groups that will be impacted in decision making should be engaged with.

## Part IV: The way ahead — Moving forward together

A Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada: Let’s Get Moving is nothing less than a rallying cry to get Canadians moving more and sitting less, more often. It was created to guide all sectors and orders of governments in taking bold new steps together to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary living in Canada.

The Common Vision is also an invitation for all organizations, communities and leaders that have a stake in increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living to come together by collaborating, coordinating and committing to collective action while at the same time respecting the unique roles, responsibilities and resources that each group can offer within their own domains.

### What organizations, communities and leaders can do

All interested organizations, communities and leaders that have a stake in increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living can consider immediate opportunities to promote, share, and use the Common Vision, either alone or in partnership with others.

#### Promote. Share. Use.

- Consider how the Common Vision can be used in your organization or community.
- Compare and contrast the Areas of Focus and Strategic Imperatives to your organization or community’s mandate, mission, strategic plan and/or priority activities that include the advancement of physical activity and reduction of sedentary living opportunities for your members, clients. Also compare with other stakeholders and partners.
- Reference the Common Vision to inform decision-making, planning, resource allocation and the creation or revamping of strategies, policies and programs.
- Consider how the Common Vision can help you better measure and report on success.

- Talk to others (in your sector and other sectors) about how a new Common Vision for physical activity and reducing sedentary living can help them in their work or in other roles in their community.
- Share the Common Vision with your colleagues, staff, other volunteers and leaders - take it with you to meetings, conferences, workshops and other local, regional and national gatherings; or send it by e-mail or through social media to start a conversation.
- Partner with other organizations and communities around shared priorities to leverage resources, achieve shared outcomes and achieve change across sectors.
- Build the foundational principles into your own policies and programming with a view to engaging key groups that will be impacted.
- Raise awareness of the relevant Calls to Action in the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and identify opportunities to respond to the unique needs of Indigenous peoples.
- Use the Common Vision as a framework for an action plan to advance physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour in your organization or community.
- Propose how it could be used to support or review existing policies and programs for structured and unstructured physical activity or for reducing sedentary living in your organization or community.
- Share how it can influence places and spaces to support activities in daily living, including land-based activities.
- Challenge yourself and others to rethink how the Common Vision can help make physical activity the default choice.
- Be a champion for the Common Vision.

### What governments can do

Leadership will also be essential in getting the country moving. Federal, provincial and territorial ministries responsible for sport, physical activity, recreation, health and education, among others, play a key policy role in setting the stage for enabling and encouraging Canadians to move more and sit less. It is in this context that federal, provincial and territorial governments are committed to helping build, broker and convene organizations, communities and leaders across all relevant policy domains.

### Build. Broker. Convene.

- **Build on existing efforts:** Important collaborative work is already underway at the municipal, provincial, territorial and national levels to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary living for Canadians that must be acknowledged and continued. Whether in sport, recreation, healthy living or other policy domains, all orders of government can build upon this good work. When using the Common Vision, all can seek connections for collaborative efforts to advance the shared goals of existing policies, strategies, and frameworks that include sport, physical activity, education, recreation and health.
- **Broker joint planning and decision-making:** Governments of all orders will come together to explore new and exciting ways to implement the Common Vision across all relevant policy domains, and look to co-develop opportunities to achieve early successes and momentum.

- **Convene organizations, communities, leaders:** Federal, provincial and territorial governments continue to work together with organizations, communities and leaders to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary living. Moving forward, governments can convene all partners and Canadians to realize the benefits and full impact of the Common Vision.

#### What governments, organizations, communities and leaders can do together

Working with others, governments can bolster existing and bring forward new, healthy public policies; support shared monitoring tools for comparable cross-country data to inform policy development; partner in leading-edge research and experimentation that can improve the evidence base, including testing new and scaling up proven physical activity and sedentary living interventions; broker and build new relationships and partnerships, including across departments, policy areas, sectors and between all orders of government; and build capacity among organizations to deliver more effective programming.

Evidence shows that multi-sectoral approaches involving all segments of society are required to address complex issues that affect the entire population. It is in this context that federal, provincial and territorial governments are committed to move forward with others.

Working together and with other interested organizations, communities and leaders, federal, provincial and territorial governments can ACT with accountability, coordination and collaboration, and transparency to foster collective action around the Common Vision.

#### Accountability

No institution or sector acting alone can achieve the desired outcomes, results and impact. With leadership from federal, provincial and territorial governments, the following steps can be taken to foster accountability:

- Create and commit together to a collaborative accountability framework with all involved organizations, communities, leaders and key groups that will be impacted by the Common Vision.
- Create and implement a monitoring and reporting action plan to support and report on progress achieved through the Common Vision. This plan will leverage work underway by federal, provincial and territorial governments and other partners in the areas of sport, recreation and healthy living/healthy weights.

#### Coordination and collaboration

New coordinated and collaborative action can take into account the range of pan-Canadian partners across sectors whose interest and contribution will be needed to achieve the shared outcomes and impacts of the Common Vision. With leadership from federal, provincial and territorial governments, the following steps can be taken to foster shared leadership, shared responsibility and shared results:

- Document the contribution and roles of organizations in accordance with their respective mandates, resources, priorities and authorities.

- Facilitate discussions to explore a national coordinating mechanism to advance the Common Vision.
- Negotiate and reach consensus on the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and desired impacts of activities undertaken through collective action.
- Address relevant Calls to Action in The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). Work to co-develop policies and opportunities that meet the unique needs of Indigenous peoples.
- Build on existing efforts to align and coordinate national policies, strategies and frameworks across sport, physical activity, recreation, and health, as well as other policy domains.
- Identify willing champions and/or ambassadors from all walks of life to lead in promoting and activating the Common Vision.

### Transparency

Increasingly, governments across the country are demonstrating their commitment to open government by pursuing open data, open information and open dialogue. The goal is to promote transparency, empower citizens, and harness new technologies. Business, industry, the not-for-profit sector, academia and other members of civil society share in this commitment. With leadership from federal, provincial and territorial governments, the following steps can be taken to ensure transparency in implementing the Common Vision:

- Establish and agree on a process and timetable for regular public reporting on actions, achievements and outcomes stemming from the Common Vision.
- Explore with other involved organizations, communities and leaders new means and ways to collect and disseminate data, identify new opportunities to share and access data, as well as new ways of connecting and reporting data and shared results.
- Develop an effective knowledge transfer approach.

Governments, communities, organizations and leaders can join together to empower shared leadership that will usher in a new era of active living and vitality for all Canadians. We can support all Canadians in moving more and sitting less, more often to help move the country forward toward a healthier, happier and more active future.

Let's Get Moving!

### Notes

\* Although Quebec is not opposed to the principles underlying the Common Vision, it has its own programs, action plans, objectives and targets for the promotion of physical activity and healthy lifestyles, all areas which are under Quebec's responsibility. The Government of Quebec does not participate in federal, provincial and territorial initiatives in those areas, but agrees to exchange information and best practices with other governments.

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