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Open Letter

June 19, 2008

Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Health, and
Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Education and Child Protection

Dear Ministers:

We are encouraged by recent developments which have the potential to improve school nutrition environments. These include: the passage of Ontario's *Bill 8, Healthy Foods for Healthy Schools Act* in April 2008; the passage of Manitoba's *Bill 2, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Trans Fat and Nutrition)*; and British Columbia's announcement, in its throne speech, of plans to expand the province's free fruit and vegetable program to all schools by 2010.

However, too many schools are governed by inadequate nutrition standards and recent school food surveys demonstrate that many foods offered in schools are high in saturated fat, trans fat, salt, and sugar. And, government investments in truly healthy school foods, like fruits, vegetables and whole grains, remain meager.

Therefore, to improve school foods, we urge you to take the following actions:

1. Develop and support the implementation of comprehensive Pan-Canadian school nutrition policies that contain nutrition standards for all foods distributed in school and reflect *Canada's Food Guide (2007)* as well as the US Institute of Medicine's *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools (2007)*.
2. Support the establishment of a pan-Canadian school meals program that is based on health-protecting nutrition standards and encourages healthy eating habits.
3. Conduct regular monitoring of school food policies and guidelines, food offerings, and student consumption measured against benchmarks.

Canada's children are entitled to nutritious fare at school regardless of where they live. We urge you to implement these recommendations to ensure that all children can learn in a healthy school nutrition environment. These measures will help children improve their diets and establish healthy eating patterns that persist into adulthood, thereby ensuring the health of future generations and reducing the high human and economic price of diet-related disease.

To facilitate the collaboration and study necessary to mobilize health, education and child protection decision-makers, we urge you all to convene a healthy school foods summit during the 2008-2009 school year to establish a Pan-Canadian action plan to implement these three recommendations.

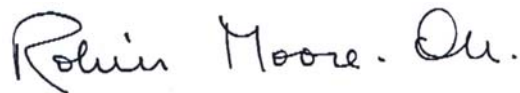
Respectfully submitted,



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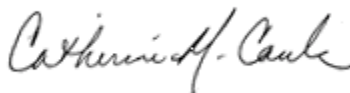
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