



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PAEDIATRIC HEALTH CENTRES (CAPHC)  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES CENTRES DE SANTÉ PÉDIATRIQUES (ACCSP)

## The Canadian Association of Paediatric Health Centres (CAPHC) Heralds the Leitch Report as a Step Toward Healthier Children and Youth

Ottawa, ON (March 26, 2008) Ms. Elaine Orrbine, President and Chief Executive Office of the Canadian Association of Paediatric Health Centres (CAPHC) today welcomed the release of *Reaching for the Top: A Report by the Advisor on Healthy Children and Youth*, commissioned by the Government of Canada to provide recommendations on how to help improve the health and wellness of Canada's children and youth.

"On behalf of our member organizations, CAPHC would like to express our appreciation to the Government of Canada, in particular to Canada's Minister of Health, The Honourable Tony Clement, for acknowledging the need to better understand the challenges and risks threatening the health and well being of our children and youth," said Ms. Orrbine. "We would also like to acknowledge and express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Kellie Leitch for implementing this Pan-Canadian consultation that engaged so many children, youth, parents and professionals from multiple sectors and jurisdictions."

As stated in Dr. Leitch's report, CAPHC endorses the principle that investing in the health of Canada's children and youth is as essential to our growth as a nation as investing in infrastructure.

CAPHC fully endorses a focused and targeted national strategy for children and youth. This strategy should be built on the three fundamental pillars outlined in this report. These pillars directly address significant morbidity and mortality within the child and youth population throughout Canada.

Ms. Orrbine said, "Unintentional injury, mental illness, and chronic complex health disease pose multiple challenges and risks that are seriously threatening the health and well-being of our children – our country's future. These challenges require our attention as a nation committed to securing a healthy future."

The report also recommends that healthcare stakeholders, caregivers and parents focus and build multiple national strategies within the following three child and youth health areas - *Injury Prevention and Safety; Mental Health and Chronic Illness; and Obesity and Health Lifestyles*. CAPHC supports these recommendations and believes that focusing attention in these key areas has the potential to make a significant difference in improving the health and well-being of children and youth.

Dr. Leitch endorses a focused and targeted approach to addressing these issues, building new models of collaboration and innovation with a strong focus on knowledge sharing across disciplines and sectors. CAPHC firmly supports this recommendation as well.

While Dr. Leitch's report appropriately recognizes the many successful national programs and our nation's longstanding commitment to improving the health and well being of our children and youth, the report also concludes that some consolidation is required within existing programs and resources to

focus on the three priority areas.

A key theme throughout the report emphasizes the need to evaluate, benchmark and measure ourselves against the best in the world, so that Canada can become the best in the world. Many of the recommended strategies within this report are based on successful models that have had significant impact on the health and well-being of children and youth in other OECD nations.

Within a targeted national strategy (across three pillars - Injury Prevention and Safety; Mental Illness and Mental Health; and Chronic Complex Conditions including Childhood Disabilities), the report also recommends a focus on:

- setting national child and youth population health standards;
- collaboration and networking opportunities among NGOs, industry, governments and families;
- encouraging research and knowledge translation; and
- supporting social marketing activities to promote healthy behaviors and activities.

Finally, CAPHC endorses the creation of a National Office of Child and Youth Health that can address current and emerging child and youth health issues. Similar models have been successfully implemented in other OECD countries and CAPHC recognizes this element as an excellent and achievable first step. The National Office of Child and Youth Health will address the needs of all children and youth, while emphasizing the vulnerabilities of marginalized populations (i.e. our First Nations, Inuit and Metis populations).

## **About CAPHC**

CAPHC was established in 2001 through a transformative process of organizational renewal of the Canadian Association of Paediatric Hospitals. This watershed activity was undertaken to respond to member needs arising from emerging healthcare challenges and the shifting landscape of child and youth health service delivery in Canada - child healthcare organizations were undergoing fundamental structural changes.

Today CAPHC is a forty-two member organization representing multidisciplinary health professionals that provide health services for children, youth and their families within: quaternary and tertiary health centres; community health centres; rehabilitation centres; and home care provider agencies nationwide.

All children's hospitals and their respective Children's Hospital Foundations in Canada are members of CAPHC, thereby providing linkages to clinical care, education and research. A complete list of CAPHC member organizations is posted on CAPHC's web site – [www.caphc.org](http://www.caphc.org).

CAPHC's mandate is to effect system-wide change in the delivery of health services to children and youth across Canada. CAPHC focuses on initiatives that have national and broad relevance, and at the same time are practical and actionable at the point of service delivery.

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