

# **Sport Matters Group Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance Pre-Budget Consultations August 2014**

## **Executive Summary**

Sport Matters Group (SMG) is a group of individuals and organizations who believe that a values-based, ethical sport experience, along with regular and accessible physical activity and facilities required to participate are integral to Canadian culture and the development of our people, communities and nation. We have gathered together representatives from a number of groups who work in this sector to discuss some “big picture” issues that pertain to the sector as a whole. The Canadian Olympic Committee, the Canadian Paralympic Committee, Own the Podium and ParticipACTION have all collaborated to bring this submission and its recommendations to your attention. The submission is based on the key priority areas of interest of over 60 sport and physical activity organizations that SMG represents.

This submission will highlight the priorities and actions that support Canadians wanting to be active as well as those pursuing elite endeavours – with an overall goal of improving health, wellness and excellence. The Standing Committee on Finance will receive a number of submissions from sport, physical activity and recreation organizations, all of them viable and worthy of consideration. These submissions will seek support for priorities determined to be critical to the core work of their respective organizations and that reflect the detail of initiatives and partnerships that exist in sector.

The submission will outline the importance of sport to Canada. It will also reinforce the role of physical activity in the health of Canadians and how increased investment of health care dollars in health promotion and physical activity programs will ultimately reduce health care costs across both provincial and federal health care budgets. Lastly, it will point out the need to support investment in upgraded infrastructure where Canadians can be active, participate in sport and recognize the benefits of stronger communities.

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers of sport approved the Canadian Sport Policy in 2012 as a roadmap that establishes direction and desired outcomes for sport in Canada through 2022. (Canadian Sport Policy 2012). Additionally, a number of interested groups, including ParticipACTION are working on a plan, the Active Canada 20/20 initiative, to coordinate an approach to health-enhancing physical activity initiatives. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association is similarly spearheading development of the National Recreation Framework which will allow for a bold re-visioning of recreation’s capacity for achieving wellbeing.

SMG will be seeking an opportunity to present this submission and our recommendations to the Standing Committee on Finance. We would like to also respectfully request that the Committee consider scheduling additional presentations from sport, physical activity and recreation organizations at a similar time. We believe this coordinated approach to the presentations will provide the best opportunity to understand the broader sector scope and its contribution to the health and well-being of Canadians.

## **Sport**

The federal government has been very supportive of high performance sport over the past few years, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by the sector. Sport in Canada is guided by the Canadian Sport Policy 2012 whose vision is to have, by 2022, “a dynamic and innovative culture that promotes and celebrates participation and excellence in sport”. The policy goes on to state that this should mean that Canada be a leading sport nation where all Canadians can pursue sport to the extent of their abilities and interests, including performing at the highest levels; and where sport delivers benefits, for increasing numbers, to individual health and well-being, and contributes to socio-economic outcomes.

According to the Department of Canadian Heritage (2013) Canada’s sport sector accounts for 2% of all paid jobs in Canada and employs more than 260,000 people. In 2008 40% of Canadian households spent on average \$784 (Statistics Canada) on sports and recreation and in 2010 spending associated with the Canadian sport tourism industry reached \$3.6 billion, an increase of 8.8% from 2008 (Sport Canada 2013). Clearly, sport is a significant contributor to the economy.

In addition Sport Canada also reports that 72% of Canadians believe that sport is a key contributor to quality of life in their communities while the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) found in 2012 that 34% of Canadian adults and 72% of children participated directly in sport. Canadians care about sport and continue to believe in its power to influence their lives.

While it is important to provide opportunities for all Canadians to participate in sport we must also provide the opportunity for them to participate for as long as they wish to and at whatever level they wish to including the highest of those levels. The goal for high performance sport in the Canadian Sport Policy 2012 is that “Canadians are systematically achieving world-class results at the highest levels of international competition through fair and ethical means.”

For this to be a reality continued financial support is critical. Results at the recent Olympic and Paralympic Games in Sochi point to the fact other countries are not letting up in their quest to reach the podium at major Games. While Canada performed well in Sochi the medal totals show that others are taking podium success very seriously. The table below shows the comparison between Canada's medal results and placings at the two most recent Olympic and Paralympic Games.

<b>Canada's Performance at Recent Olympic Games</b>					
<u>Games</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Winter</b>					
Sochi 2014	4	10	10	5	25
Vancouver 2010	3	14	7	5	26
<b>Summer</b>					
London 2012	14	1	5	12	18
Beijing 2008	15	3	9	6	18

<b>Canada's Performance at Recent Paralympic Games</b>					
<u>Games</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Winter</b>					
Sochi 2014	4	7	2	7	16
Vancouver 2010	3	10	5	4	19
<b>Summer</b>					
London 2012	13	7	15	9	31
Beijing 2008	10	19	10	21	50

### **Recommendation 1**

**That the federal government maintain its current level of funding to high performance sport through Sport Canada.**

Although we believe that funding high performance sport today and into the foreseeable future is important we must also look to the longer term future of our high performance athletes.

Canada's high performance athletes and coaches continue to impress on the world stage. The 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games were successful for Canada and we continue to be a dominant winter sport nation. Canada will host the America's in the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games and Canadian athletes will once again battle for medals. Toronto 2015 is an important preparatory competition for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Canada's performance in the global high performance sport arena matters to Canadians. A new generation of role models emerges from each and every Games and they inspire Canadian communities from coast to coast. Medal success unites Canadians, builds communities and enhances civic and national pride.

The development of Canada's "next generation" of podium potential athletes demands the attention of all partners involved in high performance sport. Canada's pool of such athletes is declining and this is cause for concern. To arrest this decline, additional financial resources are required to ensure that athletes striving for podium results in 2020 and 2022 have access to quality coaching, an optimal daily training environment and quality sport medicine and science services. The blueprint for developing Canada's "next generation" of champions has been developed. The cost per annum for the next 3 years is an incremental \$10 million from the public sector matched by a corresponding \$10 million from the private sector. These resources will strengthen the high performance athlete pathway and improve the quantity and quality of athletes eight to five years away from the podium. It will ensure that there is a seamless transition between national and provincial partners and that accelerated development occurs for younger athletes and coaches. National and provincial sport organizations, together with the federal and provincial governments are critical partners in delivering sustainable podium success for Canada.

Canadian Sport Institutes continue to play a critical leadership role in conjunction with the provinces in providing an optimal daily training environment for athletes and coaches along with delivering quality sport medicine and science services to Canada's future Olympic and Paralympic Champions. These Institutes provide for strategic federal and provincial collaboration in developing Canada's next generation of podium potential athletes and coaches.

Harnessing additional financial resources from both the public and private sector is a critical success factor in Canada's ability to develop the next generation of podium potential athletes.

## **Recommendation 2**

**That the federal government fund the development of the next generation of podium potential athletes in the amount of \$10 million per year to be matched by the private sector. These funds would be allocated to Own the Podium to be aligned with annual recommendations to National Sport Organizations and Canadian Sport Institutes.**

## **Physical Activity**

It is estimated that the federal government spends \$9 billion on direct operational costs related to health care (excluding transfers to the provinces and territories). It is also estimated that 2% of that amount is spent on health promotion and physical activity related initiatives. We believe this should be increased to 3% representing an additional investment of \$90 million.

The facts to support this are widely publicized and difficult to ignore.

- Only 15% of adults and fewer than 7% of children and youth (ages 5-17) meet the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for health benefits (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, 2009, 2011))
- Active Healthy Kids Canada gave Canada an overall grade of D minus for physical activity levels of children and youth. (Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2014)
- Canadian kids are spending seven hours and 48 minutes a day in front of television, video game and computer screens per week, that is as much time as their parents spend at work.(Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card, 2012)
- Approximately 1 in 4 Canadians (adults and children) is obese (PHAC & CIHI, 2011)
- Physical inactivity costs Canadian taxpayers approximately \$6.8 billion a year, or 3.7 percent of health care costs, per year. Getting moving and active is associated with as much as a 30% reduction in all causes of mortality rates. (*Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism, 2012*)
- Results from the Canadian Health Measures Survey forecast accelerated disease development, increased health care costs and loss of productivity due to declining fitness levels in Canada (CHMS, 2010)
- Physical fitness levels are down 15-25% over the past 30 years. “The fittest adults are the healthiest!” Statistics Canada (CHMS, 2014)

The Canadian Institute of Actuaries (2013) warns that by the year 2037, assuming a 3.5% annual increase, provincial operating budgets will spend 69% on health care, up from 44% today. We simply must find ways to minimize this increase as it will leave little for other programs. Investing in physical activity and health promotion now can help to do this.

### **Recommendation # 3**

**That the federal government increase its allocation to spending on health promotion and physical activity initiatives from 2% to 3% representing a \$90 million increase. These funds can be directed to the Public Health Agency of Canada in order to support a coordinated approach to health-enhancing physical activity initiatives.**

### **Infrastructure**

If we are going to provide opportunities for Canadians to participate in sport, physical activity and recreation we also need to ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place in order to allow them to do so. Currently the existing infrastructure has deteriorated to the point where it is a barrier to many Canadians being able to take part in activities that will provide sport opportunities, health and social benefits. There is now an estimated \$17 billion investment requirement for sport, physical activity and recreation infrastructure that needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

### **Recommendation #4**

**That the federal government follow the recommendation of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association submission and include an annual commitment of \$925 million for 3 years in partnership with provinces/territories and municipalities to invest in an infrastructure program that is dedicated specifically for sport, physical activity and recreation projects.**