

Via e-mail: Minister_Ministre@hc-sc.gc.ca

April 5, 2013

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health
Health Canada
Brooke Claxton Building, 16th Floor
70 Columbine Driveway
Tunney's Pasture, Mail Stop: 0916C
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

Dear Minister Aglukkaq,

RE: World Health Day on April 7th — Reducing Hypertension

On behalf of the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) and the Canadian Council of Cardiovascular Nurses (CCCN), we are writing to acknowledge World Health Day and its chosen global priority area of concern: hypertension.

As a means to prevent this pervasive public health issue, CNA and CCCN support Bill C-460, the Sodium Reduction Strategy for Canada Act, which aims to reduce Canadians' dietary sodium intake. The sodium reduction strategy represented by the bill will prevent premature death, promote health and wellbeing and boost Canada's economic productivity, saving more than \$1 billion in health-care spending per year. *We encourage you to implement this sodium reduction strategy, including measures to reduce and regulate the amount of sodium in processed and restaurant foods.*

Three key reasons make it important to implement this bill. First, the voluntary measures currently in place for industry have not been successful in significantly reducing the amount of sodium Canadians consume through manufactured food; second, efforts to increase awareness and educate Canadians about hypertension have been inadequate; and third, the targets laid out in Health Canada's guidelines for sodium consumption are simply not being met. Clearly, more far-reaching measures are needed if we are to realize the benefits of decreasing sodium intake.

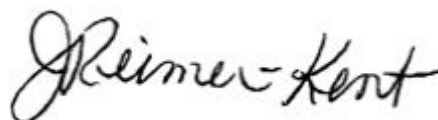
Health promotion and disease prevention efforts that reduce hypertension are essential for preventing heart disease and stroke. Not only can sodium reduction result in annual cost savings of \$1.4 billion, it can save many lives. Each day, thirty Canadians die because of excessive dietary sodium intake and some 10,000 to 26,000 die needlessly each year from heart attacks, heart failure and strokes due to high blood pressure.

To meaningfully acknowledge World Health Day on April 7th, and improve the health of Canadians, we ask you to implement Bill C-460, the sodium reduction strategy that will lower the high rates of hypertension and preventable deaths among Canadians.

Sincerely,



Barbara Mildon, RN, PhD, CHE, CCHN(C)
President
Canadian Nurses Association (CNA)



Jocelyn Reimer-Kent, RN, MN
National President
Canadian Council of Cardiovascular
Nurses (CCCN)