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**Supporting Public Awareness Initiatives  
on the Health Effects of  
Climate Change and Air Pollution**



*A Survey Conducted by the  
Canadian Public Health Association*

September 1999

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# Supporting Public Awareness Initiatives on the Health Effects of Climate Change and Air Pollution

## Background Information

There is compelling scientific evidence that damage to the earth's atmosphere, in the form of climate change and air pollution, will have increasingly severe impacts on the health of Canadians. Reduced food production and human migration resulting from temperature changes and decreased soil moisture are examples of how climate change can affect our lives. Air pollution is already taking its toll, with six percent of all respiratory admissions in Canadian hospitals related to smog.<sup>1</sup> Air pollution is also the cause of premature death for 16,000 Canadians annually and is frequently related to allergic and cardio-respiratory disorders affecting thousands more.<sup>2</sup>

## Project Sponsorship and Partnership

The Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), with funding from the Climate Change Action Fund and the support of Health Canada, is working in partnership with the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian School Boards' Association, Friends of the Earth and TransAlta Corporation to develop a National Strategy that will support public awareness initiatives on the health effects of climate change and air pollution.

## About our Project

Our first step is to survey key informants in the health, environmental advocacy, education and private sectors to identify public awareness initiatives currently underway, as well as critical gaps, needs for support, and opportunities for partnerships and collaboration. CPHA is particularly interested in initiatives targeted to the general public and to primary and secondary school students. Based on the results of the enclosed survey, CPHA will develop a National Strategy that will guide the future work of the association and its partners in supporting and strengthening public awareness initiatives on the health effects of climate change and air pollution.

## An Invitation to Participate

CPHA would like to invite your organization/ministry to participate in a 30-minute telephone interview with a member of our research team. The Interview Questions, a Glossary of Terms and a Public Awareness Initiative Information Form are attached to assist you in preparing for the interview. The results of this interview will be confidential. Your comments will be summarized in the report, with those of other interviewees, and will not be attributed to you by name or organization/ministry, or in any other way.

If you have any questions or would like further information about this project, please contact:

**Caryn Wolfe, Project Coordinator**

*Supporting Public Awareness Initiatives on the Health Effects of Climate Change and Air Pollution*  
Canadian Public Health Association, 400-1565 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 8R1  
Tel: 613-725-3769 x 146 Fax: 613-725-9826 E-mail: cwolfe@cpha.ca Web: www.cpha.ca

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1. Pollution Probe, cited in Environment Canada, *Canada's Transportation Challenge*, 1996, p. 2.

2. David Suzuki Foundation, *Taking Our Breath Away: The Health Effects of Air Pollution and Climate Change*, October 1998, p. 32.

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## Glossary of Terms<sup>1</sup>

**air pollution** — refers to a number of ground level substances that directly damage health by entering the body when we breathe. Ground-level ozone, which is the main ingredient in smog, is formed when oxides of nitrogen meet with hydrocarbons in sunlight. In urban areas, up to three-quarters of the pollutants that combine to form ground-level ozone come from automobiles. For the purposes of this survey, air pollution refers only to outdoor air pollution.

**Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) National Strategy** — based on the results of the enclosed survey, CPHA will develop a National Strategy that will support public awareness initiatives on the health effects of climate change and air pollution. Responding to the successes and challenges identified in the survey analysis, CPHA will make recommendations for future work in the areas of policy development, programs, resources, research and funding. The Strategy can be used by CPHA and its partners in the health, education, environmental advocacy and private sectors as a basis for action that supports public awareness on the health effects of climate change and air pollution.

**climate change** — refers to general, long-term shifts or alterations in the average condition or variability of weather, either regionally or globally. This is measured by changes in all the features we associate with weather, such as temperature, wind patterns, precipitation, and storms. Although an ongoing, natural process, climate change today reflects the dramatic increase in human activity on Earth (namely the burning of fossil fuels such as oil and coal) since the Industrial Revolution. The 20th century has been the warmest century in 600 years, with the 1980s and 1990s being the warmest decades on record.

**Kyoto Protocol** — in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997, Canada and 160 other industrialized nations committed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, as part of an international agreement on climate change. Canada's commitment under this protocol is to reduce its emissions to 6% below 1990 levels by the period between 2008-2012.

**National Climate Change Implementation Strategy (NCCIS)** — a federal strategy established in response to the Kyoto Protocol. The Strategy is scheduled to be completed by 2000 and will include recommendations made by experts from 16 "Issues Tables", ranging from public education and outreach, to business and industry, on what Canada should do to meet Kyoto's targets.

**public awareness initiative** — any program, action, event or material whose purpose is to develop skills and/or increase knowledge, ultimately effecting change in the behaviour and attitudes of a target population. Examples range from resource materials and training initiatives to classroom presentations and community action projects.

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1. Definitions have been derived from a variety of sources, including Environment Canada, Health Canada, and the David Suzuki Foundation.

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**F O R C P H A O F F I C E U S E O N L Y**

Sector & Organization/Ministry Code:	Interviewer Notes:
Name of Organization/Ministry:	
Date/Time of Interview:	
Interviewer:	

## Interview Questions

### Introduction

1. Has your organization/ministry undertaken any work on the following environmental issues?

*Please check all that apply.*

- Climate change
- Air pollution
- Waste management/Recycling
- Energy conservation
- Other *[please specify]* \_\_\_\_\_
- Does not undertake any work on environmental issues

**\* Note:** If your organization/ministry does not undertake any work on environmental issues, the only questions you should answer are those marked with an asterisk (\*), namely questions 3, 7, 8, 10-12, 16, 17, 19-28.

2. What kind of work does your organization/ministry do on environmental issues?

*Please check all that apply.*

- Policy development
- Research
- Evaluation
- Advocacy
- Education and awareness
- Skills building or training
- Other *[please specify]* \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know

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## The Health Effects of Climate Change

- \* 3. a) Does your organization/ministry regard the health effects of climate change as a problem?
- Yes  
 No  
 Don't know
- b) If Yes,
- i) how does your organization/ministry describe this problem?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- ii) how serious a problem does your organization/ministry believe this is?
- Not Serious                       Moderately Serious                       Very Serious
4. Has your organization/ministry issued a specific, official policy or position statement on the health effects of climate change?
- Yes *[please provide details]* \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- No  
 Don't know
5. Does your organization/ministry currently have a budget for public awareness initiatives on the health effects of climate change?
- Yes *[please provide details]* \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- No  
 Don't know
6. Has your organization/ministry directly undertaken any public awareness initiatives to address the health effects of climate change?
- Yes *[please complete the Public Awareness Initiative Information Form attached to this questionnaire]*  
 No  
 Don't know

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\* 7. a) Are you aware of any other organizations/ministries, that are undertaking public awareness initiatives on the health effects of climate change?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

b) If Yes, please list those initiatives

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\* 8. a) Has your organization/ministry contributed to the work of other organizations/ministries that are undertaking public awareness initiatives on the health effects of climate change?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

b) If Yes, how? *Please check all that apply.*

- Financial contribution
- In-kind contribution
- Other *[please specify]* \_\_\_\_\_

### **Current State of Your Organization's/Ministry's Public Awareness Work on Climate Change**

9. If your organization/ministry has successfully implemented public awareness initiatives on the health effects of climate change, what were the most important factors that contributed to that success? *Please check all that apply.*

- Research & knowledge
- Leadership
- Public interest
- Funding
- Time
- Human resources
- Partnerships
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know
- Not applicable

\* 10. What are the most important elements that would be needed to improve your organization's/ministry's work on the health effects of climate change? *[please check all that apply]*

- Research & knowledge
- Leadership
- Public interest
- Funding
- Time
- Human resources
- Partnerships
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know

\* 11. In summary, how would you rate your organization's/ministry's current capacity to advance public awareness of the health effects related to climate change?

- No Capacity
- Some Capacity
- Broad Capacity

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## The Health Effects of Air Pollution

[Note: for the purposes of this survey, air pollution refers only to outdoor air pollution]

\* 12. a) Does your organization/ministry regard the health effects of air pollution as a problem?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

b) If Yes,

i) how does your organization/ministry describe this problem?

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ii) how serious a problem does your organization/ministry believe this is?

- Not Serious
- Moderately Serious
- Very Serious

13. Has your organization/ministry issued a specific, official policy or position statement on the health effects of air pollution?

- Yes *[please provide details]* \_\_\_\_\_
- No
- Don't know

14. Does your organization/ministry currently have a budget for public awareness initiatives on the health effects of air pollution?

- Yes *[please provide details]* \_\_\_\_\_
- No
- Don't know

15. Has your organization/ministry directly undertaken any public awareness initiatives on the health effects of air pollution?

- Yes *[please complete the Public Awareness Initiative Information Form attached to this questionnaire]*
- No
- Don't know

\* 16. a) Are you aware of any other organizations/ministries that are undertaking public awareness initiatives on the health effects of air pollution?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

b) If Yes, please list those initiatives

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- \* 17. a) Has your organization/ministry contributed to the work of other organizations/ministries which are undertaking public awareness initiatives on the health effects of air pollution?
- Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
- b) If Yes, how? *Please check all that apply*
- Financial contribution
  - In-kind contribution
  - Other *[please specify]* \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### **Current State of Your Organization's/Ministry's Public Awareness Work on Air Pollution**

18. If your organization/ministry has successfully implemented public awareness initiatives on the health effects of air pollution, what were the most important factors that contributed to that success? *Please check all that apply.*

- Research & knowledge
- Leadership
- Public interest
- Funding
- Time
- Human resources
- Partnerships
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know
- Not applicable

\* 19. What are the most important elements that would be needed to improve your organization's/ministry's work on the health effects of air pollution? *Please check all that apply.*

- Research & knowledge
- Leadership
- Public interest
- Funding
- Time
- Human resources
- Partnerships
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know

\* 20. In summary, how would you rate your organization's/ministry's current capacity to advance public awareness of the health effects of air pollution?

- No Capacity
- Some Capacity
- Broad Capacity

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## The National Climate Change Implementation Strategy

*Please refer to the Glossary of Terms for descriptions of the National Climate Change Implementation Strategy (NCCIS) and the Canadian Public Health Association National Strategy.*

- \* 21. Prior to receiving this survey, were you aware that a National Climate Change Implementation Strategy (NCCIS) is being developed in Canada?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
  
- \* 22. Has your organization/ministry been involved in the national process to develop the NCCIS?
  - Yes *[please specify how]* \_\_\_\_\_
  - No
  - Don't know
  
- \* 23. Does your organization/ministry believe that the NCCIS should include public awareness and education on the health effects of climate change and air pollution?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
  
- \* 24. Would your organization/ministry be interested in participating in the NCCIS Consultation that will likely be conducted in 2000?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Don't know

## The Canadian Public Health Association National Strategy

*Please refer to the Glossary of Terms for descriptions of the National Climate Change Implementation Strategy (NCCIS) and the Canadian Public Health Association National Strategy.*

- \* 25. Based on the results of this survey, CPHA will develop a National Strategy. From your organization's perspective, what are the most critical components of a national strategy that will be used to further public awareness of the health effects of climate change and air pollution?

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## About Your Sector's Role in Public Awareness on the Health Effects of Climate Change and Air Pollution

- \* 26. How can your sector most effectively participate in public awareness initiatives on the health effects of climate change and air pollution?

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- \* 27. a) Are you aware of any opportunities within the next year for developing public awareness initiatives on these issues within your sector?

- Yes  
 No

- b) If Yes, please provide details (conferences, workshops, campaigns, curriculum development, etc.)

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- \* 28. Do you have any other comments or concerns regarding this survey?

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FOR CPHA OFFICE USE

Sector & Organization Code	
Organization Name	
Contact Person	

## Public Awareness Initiative Information Form

Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA)  
*Supporting Public Awareness Initiatives on the  
Health Effects of Climate Change and Air Pollution*

*Please complete this form and fax it to Caryn Wolfe, Project Coordinator, at 613-725-9826.*

*Please fill out one form for each initiative.*

1. Title of your public awareness initiative:

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2. Brief description of your public awareness initiative:

*Please describe the activity or range of activities that you are undertaking.*

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3. Target audience(s): *Please check all that apply.*

- General population                       Adults 20+                       Youth (15-19)  
 School age children (5-14)               Pre-school children (0-4)  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Do you have any partners in the public awareness initiative?

- Yes
- No

If Yes, please list them:

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5. Have you produced any public awareness initiative resources?

- Yes
- No

If Yes, please describe those resources:

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6. a) Are your resources available for distribution?

- Yes
- No

If Yes, how are they distributed?

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b) Is there a charge for resources?

- Yes *[please provide costs]* \_\_\_\_\_
- No

7. Has your public awareness initiative been evaluated?

- Yes
- No

*Thank you for providing this information.  
Please fax this completed form to Caryn Wolfe, Project Coordinator at 613-725-9826*



# FAX BACK FORM

**Please complete and return**

To: Caryn Wolfe - Project Coordinator  
*Supporting Public Awareness Initiatives on the  
Health Effects of Climate Change and Air Pollution*

Fax: 613-725-9826

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Telephone Interview - Contact Information

## **Please provide the following information below:**

Name of Organization/Ministry: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # and extension: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of communication: \_\_\_\_\_