

## Health Benefits for Active Transportation

### Heart and Stroke Foundation - Cancer Care Manitoba - Alliance for the Prevention of Chronic Disease - Health inCommon

Making the Case for Primary Prevention: An Economic Analysis of Risk Factors in Manitoba

From a Global News Article upon release of the report:

"Manitoba taxpayers are on the hook for \$4.7 billion in increased health care expenditures and lost productivity over the next 15 years, due to obesity, physical inactivity and smoking.

The enormous cost estimate was released Tuesday by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba, CancerCare Manitoba and other groups who warn lifestyles have to change for the better, before health care costs spiral out of control. "This report is a wake-up call to all Manitobans that there is an urgent need for more money to be invested into primary prevention programs aimed at reducing risk factors for chronic diseases" Mark McDonald, Chair for the Alliance for the Prevention of Chronic Disease is quoted in a news release.

**"If we do nothing, in 15 years our health care system may not be sustainable."** The report titled Making the Case for Primary Prevention: An Economic Analysis of Risk Factors in Manitoba says 55 per cent of the population of Manitoba is overweight or obese, 45 per cent are inactive, and 27 per cent are smokers. The authors say reducing those numbers only a fraction each year – one or two per cent – could save Manitoba up to \$3.5 billion in direct health care costs and indirect costs to the economy – money that could be spent on roads, infrastructure or tax reductions. "This is more than a health care issue – it is an economic priority," says Dr. Donna Turner, Committee Member and Epidemiologist/Provincial Director at CancerCare Manitoba.

### World Health Organization

"...Many costly and disabling conditions - cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases - are linked by common preventable risk factors. Tobacco use, prolonged, unhealthy nutrition, **physical inactivity**, and excessive alcohol use are major causes and risk factors for these conditions. ... **Changes in activity patterns as a consequence of the rise of motorised transport, sedentary leisure time activities** such as television watching will lead to physical inactivity in all but the poorest populations. **Many diseases can be prevented, yet health care systems do not make the best use of their available resources to support this process.** All too often, health care workers fail to seize patient interactions as opportunities to inform patients about health promotion and disease prevention strategies. ..."<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs172/en/index.html>

**"The cost of doing nothing far exceeds the cost of implementing primary prevention programs within the province.** It just makes better sense to address chronic illness before it starts by spending money on keeping people healthy rather than paying the cost of health care." The authors are suggesting governments invest hundreds of millions of dollars in healthy living programs next year – which they say will pay off in savings of billions of dollars in health care costs in future years.

### The Center for Disease Control and Prevention

- Implement and promote safe walk and bicycle to school programs; develop programs to support safe walk-to-school events and programs and to teach youth and parents about the benefits of walkable communities; and encourage building schools in more central and walkable areas. ....
  - Develop and encourage the use of local bicycle and pedestrian project funding criteria to increase efforts in areas with higher concentrations of youth, elderly, low-income, and ethnic minority populations.
  - Adopt and support "Complete Streets" ordinances, which ensure that streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users.
  - Collaborate with transportation planning agencies in the development of short and long-range master plans.
  - Plan, build, and retrofit residential and mixed-used streets to reduce speeds, accommodate bicyclists, and improve the walkability of the environment.
  - Plan, build, and maintain a well-connected network of off-street trails and paths for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- [http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/downloads/PA\\_State\\_Indicator\\_Report\\_2010\\_Action\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/downloads/PA_State_Indicator_Report_2010_Action_Guide.pdf)

