



Physical Activity Coalition of Manitoba

MANITOBA PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ACTION PLAN

*“Our mission is to support
increased physical activity among Manitobans
through collaboration, promotion, and education.”*

A Physical Activity Action Plan for Manitoba

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A Physical Activity Action Plan for Manitoba

BACKGROUND

In August 2000, the Alliance for the Prevention of Chronic Disease Inc.¹ and a group of physical activity-related organizations² formed a partnership to take the lead in developing a **Manitoba Physical Activity Action Plan**. By April 2001, the partnership had expanded to include the Diabetes and Chronic Diseases Unit of Manitoba Health, the Kinsmen RehFit Centre and the Rady Jewish Community Centre. The activities that were carried out to formulate the Manitoba Physical Activity Action Plan included:

- ◆ A meeting with over eighty representatives from key government, non-government, voluntary, business and labour organizations;
- ◆ A series of twelve community consultations across Manitoba;
- ◆ The compilation of the information from the community consultations into a draft Manitoba Physical Activity Action Plan; and
- ◆ A Physical Activity Summit, at which the over 100 participants used the draft Plan to identify actions necessary for the implementation of the Manitoba Physical Activity Action Plan.

The actions were compiled, and are presented in this **Manitoba Physical Activity Action Plan**. The Plan focuses on necessary actions to be taken at the provincial and community/regional levels. The actions fall within three broad categories: **Policy, Leadership and Programs**. As well, an Annex at the end of the Action Plan includes specific ideas and recommendations that came from the community consultations.

¹A coalition of the Canadian Cancer Society (Manitoba Division); Canadian Diabetes Association (Manitoba Division); CancerCare Manitoba; Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba; Manitoba Lung Association; and The Kidney Foundation of Canada (Manitoba Branch)

² Manitoba Fitness Council; Manitoba Physical Education Teachers Association; Recreation and Wellness Promotion Branch of Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism; Recreation Connections Manitoba; and Sport Manitoba

A CASE FOR LIFE-LONG PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

“If exercise could be packaged into a pill, it would be the single most widely prescribed and beneficial medicine in the nation”.

This powerful statement by Dr. Robert Butler, former Director of the National Institute on Aging, underscores the importance of engaging in regular physical activity throughout life. A large body of research has shown the benefits of regular physical activity for all age groups. Children and youth who engage in regular physical activity have increased bone mass; increased ability to fight infections; and improved motor skill development, cognitive and social functioning, and mental health.

Adults also have significant health benefits from regular physical activity: reduced risk of heart attack and of death following a heart attack; and reduced risk of Type II diabetes, colon cancer, and osteoporosis. Maintaining regular physical activity improves function and independent living of the elderly, and reduces risk and symptoms of depression and anxiety³.

The evidence of physical *in*activity among Manitoba children, youth and adults is alarming. Approximately fifty percent of Manitoba children are insufficiently active for optimum growth and development, and two-thirds of Manitoba adults are not active enough to maintain health.⁴

Promoting regular physical activity across the lifespan requires a comprehensive multi-faceted approach, with actions at individual, community, organizational and provincial levels. It must be based on an understanding of the many factors that impact on physical activity levels of individuals: factors such as perceived time, resources, accessibility, companionship and knowledge. It also requires an understanding of the influence of the external environment: education, health and workplace policies; availability and accessibility of facilities, equipment, programming and cost; transportation; and community, regional and provincial leadership.

³ Kesaniemi, Y. et al, “Dose-response issues concerning physical activity and health: an evidence-based symposium”, **Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise**. June Supp 2001, Vol 33, No. 6, pp S351- S358

⁴ **Canada Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute**, Results of the 2000 Physical Activity Monitor. http://www.cflri.ca/cflri/pa/surveys/2000survey/2000_mb.html

Children and youth need to develop life-long habits that include regular physical activity, so that they do not become *inactive* adults. Young families need opportunities for physical activity that are ‘in sync’ with their busy schedules. Adults and seniors need physical activity opportunities that are physically and financially accessible. All age groups need physical activity opportunities that are available, affordable and of sufficient variety as to meet community needs.

To achieve positive change among Manitoba’s population, communities, organizations and governments need to pool their commitment, leadership and resources. Sports, recreation, fitness and other organizations need to work together to identify and remove or minimize the barriers to participation. Manitoba needs to ensure that there are champions for physical activity in all schools, youth clubs, voluntary organizations, businesses, municipal and city governments, health-care systems, day-care centres and seniors clubs.

Successful promotion of physical activity across the lifespan requires concurrent actions at both provincial and local community/regional levels. These actions need to focus on three approaches at each level: **Policy, Leadership** and **Program** access and/or development. A population-based approach is needed to ensure that physical activity opportunities are accessible for people of all ages (children/youth, adults, elderly); include all groups (aboriginal, ethnic, disabled); and provide opportunities in a variety of community settings.

Participants at the community consultations held during the development of the Manitoba Physical Activity Action Plan identified necessary conditions to promote and support physical activity. They offered creative policy, program and leadership solutions:

- Children to receive quality physical education and daily physical activity in schools;
- Facilities to be affordable, accessible and flexible in order to provide a variety of physical activity opportunities;
- Physical activity programs scheduled for parents at the same time as activities for children;
- Volunteer leadership training and opportunities for youth, parents and seniors.

Review of the more than seventy-six recommendations and ideas show that community and regional actions, linked by a supportive provincial 'structure' are needed to engineer physical activity back into daily life. This requires a network of commitment, communication and cooperation, to build a synergy between local community, region and provincial actions.

EIGHT KEY ACTIONS

The ideas from the community consultations and the Summit have been condensed into the following eight key **Actions**, listed in no particular order of priority:

1. The **Provincial Physical Activity Committee*** advocates for the adoption of legislation that will make daily physical education mandatory in all schools and all grades from Kindergarten to Senior 4.

* As of December, 2003: PACM or the Physical Activity Coalition of Manitoba
2. **Communities and regions** encourage and support schools, school divisions and districts in the provision of resources necessary to implement the new Physical Education/Health Education (PEHE) curriculum and its recommended minimum time allotments to match the implementation plan for Early Years, Middle Years and Senior Years.
3. **Schools, school divisions and districts, recreation commissions and boards and community organizations** collaborate to offer physical activity opportunities in school facilities before and after school and at noon hour; as well as outside the schools in community facilities during the day and evening.
4. **Communities and regions** advocate to schools and school divisions and districts that all of their physical education teachers have physical education degrees.
5. **Communities and regions** advocate that recreation commissions and provincial training bodies increase the number of training opportunities for volunteers and professionals involved in physical activity programming, the training also focusing on youth leadership development.

6. **Communities and regions** build, strengthen and maintain social networks to support and sustain relationships for physical activity such as buddy systems, walking groups, and physician referrals, recommendations and prompts/reminders.
7. **Communities and regions** reduce the financial, physical and knowledge barriers to participation in physical activity programs and places.
8. The **Provincial Physical Activity Committee*** supports communities and regions by coordinating and connecting with national and provincial physical activity initiatives to maximize effort and effect.

* As of December, 2003: PACM or the Physical Activity Coalition of Manitoba

The remainder of the Manitoba Physical Activity Action Plan contains a condensed version of the many recommendations and ideas that were generated through the community consultations and the Physical Activity Summit.

Although many ideas will be widely applicable, the reader is invited to use the following criteria to decide ‘where to start’, in order to promote increased and sustained physical activity opportunities in their community, region and/or province:

1. ***Sense of Urgency: Is there an age group, approach or setting that has a special need?***
2. ***Capacity: Do we currently have the resources and ability to carry out the action?***
3. ***Greatest Impact: What action can we take that will have the greatest impact, and/or offer the highest degree of success?***

The Manitoba Physical Activity Action Plan is the result of a comprehensive compilation of community input at a variety of levels. It is however, a work in progress. It not only creates a focus on action, but also encourages creativity in partnerships and resources, thereby stimulating new ideas and inspiring future actions. Only through the concerted efforts of committed agents and champions of physical activity to advocate for change will traditional barriers be overcome.

POLICY GOAL: Relevant policy decisions and actions by all levels of government, organizations, workplaces, institutions and community groups will reflect the value of physical activity as an important component of individual and community health and well-being.

PROVINCIAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COMMITTEE* <small>*PACM of the Physical Activity Coalition of Manitoba</small>	COMMUNITY/REGIONAL COMMITTEES
<p>1. Encourage Manitoba Education to adopt legislation that will make daily physical education mandatory in all schools and all grades from Kindergarten to Senior 4 inclusive, and to develop other credit opportunities for physical activity-related leadership</p> <p>(a) Encourage Manitoba Education to make a public statement recommending that school divisions implement fully the Physical Education/Health Education curriculum (PEHE).</p> <p>(b) Recommend that all physical education teachers be qualified.</p> <p>(c) Encourage Manitoba Education and other government sectors to provide policy and resource support for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Education policies for healthy lifestyle choices in schools ➤ School divisions to allow for community use of school space ➤ Daily physical activity opportunities outside of the PEHE curriculum ➤ Physical Education Presentation package to be updated for currency and relevancy, with clearly delineated outcomes ➤ Use of current accurate research findings linking children’s physical activity to growth and learning, needs of high-risk segments of school population, need for gender-specific programs, and how to tailor programs to specific groups. 	<p>1. Encourage schools, school divisions/districts to provide the resources necessary to implement the new Physical Education/Health Education curriculum as per recommended time allotments and implementation plan for Early Years, Middle Years and Senior Years.</p> <p>(a) Advocate to schools and school divisions/districts that every school has qualified physical education-trained teachers.</p> <p>(b) Inform the public that decisions regarding Physical Education are made <u>at local level/boards</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use factual messages to encourage the public to become involved in decision-making ➤ Work with parent councils to understand and support the new PEHE curriculum ➤ Advocate for the recommended ‘times’ for the ‘Physical Education’ and the ‘Health Education’ components of the PEHE curriculum ➤ Develop local support for quality daily physical education, and communicate same to local and provincial politicians ➤ Urge school divisions/boards to reduce the ‘conflict’ between physical education and other courses, and recommend integrating physical activity into them ➤ Encourage school trustees to consult with other school divisions, MAST, municipality associations to increase physical activity opportunities in schools ➤ Examine the implementation of physical education curricula in other Manitoba school divisions and provinces, especially in the comparison of actual hours of instruction versus activity <p>(c) Advocate for physical activity opportunities in school before the school day starts, at noon hour, after school, as well as outside the school in community facilities during the day and evening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Build individual, organizational and parental understanding and support for an emphasis on physical activity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Raise public awareness of current status, and work with school divisions/districts to identify ways to provide additional daily physical activity opportunities for all grades ➤ Recommend participation opportunities for lifetime physical activities/sports at/by Grade 5 <p>(d) Build community organizational networks/teams for physical activity through comprehensive school health: include parents, students, administrators, police, public health, education and recreation personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with/make presentations to parent councils, trustees, boards ➤ Ensure that communities understand and support the link between physical activity and health and learning
<p>2. Increase public awareness province-wide through social marketing, to build support for policy development to promote physical activity: Develop and implement a province-wide marketing/educational campaign to raise awareness of physical activity needs and benefits</p> <p>(a) Encourage health, education and physical activity sectors/organizations to access/develop and distribute resource materials (research and program-related information, delivery systems) for use by communities. Focus on ‘outcomes’ analysis (past experiences/successes/issues) and design of community-level strategies</p> <p>(b) Encourage communities to take responsibility for health and share successful models</p> <p>(c) Establish a Speakers Bureau from existing physical activity-related organizations that is accessible province-wide</p>	<p>2. Build, strengthen and maintain social networks to support and sustain relationships for physical activity: buddy systems, physician recommendations, referrals, reminders/prompts (to their patients), walking groups</p> <p>(a) Set up a community bulletin board for comprehensive health and fitness information</p>
<p>3. Encourage the health sector to increase its focus on physical activity, linking it to growth, health and (chronic) disease prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop an information package explaining why physical activity is important; the 	<p>3. Promote/support collaboration among all interested and relevant community and regional groups, with opportunity for networking/meeting. Target the workplace and fitness agencies. Promote physical activity-promoting models which have provided</p>

<p>‘positive’ aspects of physical activity; and what options there are by which groups can increase their activity levels</p>	<p>effective cost-beneficial services, such as activity breaks in workplaces and schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote a ‘mind-set’ that it is socially unacceptable to be inactive ➤ Support health region staff who are trying to increase physical activity in their communities
<p>4. Encourage key provincial government sectors, First Nations and businesses to build policy and resource support through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Requirement that community grant applications reflect partnerships with multiple groups, and focus on both the general community and high risk groups ➤ Requirement that daycare, seniors and family programs include a strong physical activity component ➤ Requirement that new and/or renovated facilities be multi-use, with barrier-free design ➤ Facilities to employ appropriately trained/certified personnel ➤ Adaptation of road/street designs to allow for safe walking/bicycle paths ➤ Permission and support from public/private-owned facilities for space for physical activities 	<p>4. Work with key people (councilors; school principals, trustees, teachers, private sector) to examine/update local public policies regarding facility issues such as accessibility, multi-use, building codes, planning boards, so that they are defined by the community and customized to the need.</p> <p>(a) Publicize facility-related policies and ensure community understanding of issues re: accessibility, etc.</p> <p>(b) Lobby for new/renovated facilities to be multi-use and accessible (physically and financially), with fair time allocation for each group (depending on community needs).</p> <p>(c) Encourage local economic development groups to work with the private sector to access small business loans to promote physical activity centres</p> <p>(d) Provide support through outreach to small rural areas, using a multi-sectoral approach</p>

LEADERSHIP GOAL: Governments, institutions, organizations, workplaces and communities provide leadership to promote and support safe physical activity opportunities for all residents as an important component of individual and community health and well-being

PROVINCIAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COMMITTEE* *PACM or the Physical Activity Coalition of Manitoba	LOCAL COMMUNITY/REGIONAL COMMITTEES
1. Communicate province-wide research findings and trends in recreation to build the connection between physical activity and growth, health and disease prevention	1. Promote increase in local government allocations to recreation/physical activity: Convince municipalities that physical activity is an investment, not a subsidy. (a) Encourage parents/parent councils to seek increased physical activity opportunities for children and youth. (b) Seek creative ways to equalize/improve funding and services to smaller communities
2. Encourage a review of the certification requirements, process and opportunities for fitness leaders. Encourage training providers to improve access to education and certification opportunities for fitness leaders, and to communicate it province-wide (a) Encourage development of creative ways for certification of fitness leaders, coaches, etc to accommodate a greater range of training opportunities for participants. Recommend comprehensive roles, rather than a single-focus for physical activity personnel.	2. Develop a list of local physical educators, fitness leaders and health professionals who are available for community programs and/or consultation (a) Provide physical activity training in specific jobs, such as in a day-care curriculum (b) Retain trained recreation personnel by subsidizing training costs if participant agrees to stay on for a minimum period of time
3. Encourage a review of the structure of recreation commissions and expand recommended membership to include broad community representation (e.g. health, education, business, etc) (a) Encourage a review and publication of the roles, educational requirements and recommended salary range for recreation director positions. (b) Encourage a review of funding criteria for recreation directors, in relation to their key function/responsibilities	3. Partner with local business and education to co-finance recreation directors (e.g. joint appointments between recreation and education). Promote hiring appropriately qualified people (trained and/or with a degree in Physical Education/Recreation Studies). (a) Assist recreation directors to become familiar with their communities and volunteer training needs. (b) Develop/maintain a roster of community people with special skills related to physical activity (c) Work with others to avoid overlap. Promote community-based physical activity partnerships and expand opportunities for the recreation director to work with community committees.

<p>4. Promote Leadership courses through schools and youth volunteer organizations and address age barrier (must be over 18) through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New/revise leadership curriculum package for youth leadership training ➤ Department of Education support to promote volunteerism in schools through ‘credit hours’; guidance counselors identify students with a demonstrated interest <p>(a) Encourage the offering of ‘stepped-level’ training for physical activity leaders</p> <p>(b) Co-ordinate/publish continuing education and training opportunities (outreach)</p> <p>(c) Encourage Economic Development Office to provide job training that promotes physical activity as a business or career</p> <p>(d) Encourage professional development training (in physical education), linked with employment opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recommend funding for school physical activity coordinator ➤ Work toward physical activity equity throughout the province <p>(e) Carry out a province-wide communication campaign re: physical education and activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Presentation packages/website emphasizing that physical education teaches life skills, co-operation, team-building, leadership 	<p>4. Encourage recreation commissions and provincial training bodies to increase the number of training opportunities for volunteers and professionals involved with physical activity programming: This training should also focus on youth and leadership development.</p> <p>(a) Build volunteer capacity through use of effective volunteer development programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recruit, train and share community leaders ➤ Utilize existing volunteer training (4-H, Scouts) ➤ Include recreation director/economic development officer in training ➤ Co-ordinate leadership of volunteers ➤ Assist with new ideas (specialists/generalists) <p>(b) Encourage youth to take leadership courses (high school, peer helpers, mentor-ships):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Independent study courses in high school ➤ Summer camps led by high school-trained volunteers, promoting activity and volunteerism ➤ Youth members on boards and committees ➤ Role models and mentoring from parents, parent advisory councils, etc <p>(c) Advocate to school divisions to provide daily quality physical activity in schools through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical education specialists on staff in all Early Years schools ➤ Volunteer assistants for physical activity programs ➤ Regular mini-activity breaks during school hours ➤ Qualified leadership, ‘Best Practices’ approaches for accountability and long-term commitment
<p>5. Encourage volunteer recognition programs. Encourage corporate and business recognition of employees who volunteer.</p> <p>(a) Promote the philosophy of volunteerism in business, recommending that volunteers be included under liability insurance and in employment assistance programs</p> <p>(b) Encourage school divisions to involve parents and seniors as volunteers for physical activity programs: promote public recognition.</p>	<p>5. Provide rewards and/or public recognition for volunteering: e.g. reduce fees for children of parents who volunteer, pay babysitting, waive registration fees for leaders, provide training</p> <p>(a) Ensure there is safety and liability protection for volunteers.</p>

PROGRAM GOAL: Organizations and service providers at the community level collectively provide a relevant, comprehensive integrated year-round schedule of physical activity programs and activities for all residents

PROVINCIAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COMMITTEE* <small>*PACM or the Physical Activity Coalition of Manitoba</small>	LOCAL COMMUNITY/REGIONAL COMMITTEES
<p>1. Present Physical Activity Action Plan report to provincial and municipal governments.</p> <p>(a) Promote the concept of year-round physical activity to governments, school divisions and the public in the report/brief, with supporting documentation which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relationship to, and long term savings for growth, health and illness/disability prevention ➤ Changing concepts of physical activity, including focus on inter-generational activities, sport vs. non-sport, competitive vs. non-competitive, individual vs. group ➤ Goal(s) to promote physical activity to communities, senior centers, daycares, schools, municipalities, businesses, work places ➤ ‘Best Practices’ ideals and models, and examples for delivery systems and groups <p>(b) Encourage support for increased physical activity levels through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rewards/incentives for people involved in physical activity programs ➤ Sufficient human resources through recruitment incentives in rural Manitoba ➤ Travel subsidies for trained individuals to travel for program-related initiatives ➤ Lists of all programs and services in each region and/or district ➤ Physical/legal supports to involve special needs children/adults ➤ Training for leaders to work with special-needs/high risk groups ➤ Physical activity web-site to share ideas/projects (successful/unsuccessful) ➤ Sufficient regional personnel for increased activity and health needs, through creative collaboration (e.g. health, education, recreation, municipalities) 	<p>1. Identify/enlist community champion(s) within the community to look after specific areas. Share ideas and resources among communities: Issues to remember include distance between rural towns, political map limitations, resource/funds/volunteer sharing: Engage and support community-driven programs to promote physical activity behaviour change.</p> <p>(a) Enlist a local organization or structure to be responsible for coordinating the ‘structural’ aspect of physical activity: For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Local government for walking, hiking paths and trails ➤ Local highways department for asphalt roads ➤ Local business/organizations for access to public buildings for indoor activities ➤ Local school divisions for schools/gyms during non-school hours for individuals and catchment areas to increase activity opportunities, especially for elderly with reduced driving ability; and for financial/other resources/transportation to allow children to stay in school after hours to increase access to extra-curricular activities <p>(b) Build public interest/willingness to advocate for increased physical activity, and encourage the community to approach governments for change</p> <p>(c) Increase access to adventure sports and family-oriented activities</p> <p>(d) Advocate for qualified physical education teachers in schools, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Integrate physical activity into other areas of school curriculum (e.g. math, science) ➤ Include a broad range of activities and skills within the PEHE curriculum <p>Promote community-based recreation programming for children and adults after school hours, and promote unstructured activities</p>

<p>2. Encourage consultants to be available to community groups to assist in planning to meet the health and physical activity needs of the community</p>	
<p>3. Encourage health professional organizations to have their members promote, counsel and refer clients for a healthy active lifestyle</p>	
<p>4. Encourage cost-sharing mechanisms for transportation issues: wheelchair-accessible buses, Handi-transit and school buses, so that quality service provision is consistent and wait time is minimized</p> <p>(a) Increase funding for recreation directors, offering professional salaries for professional work</p>	<p>4. Reduce the financial, physical and knowledge barriers to participation in programs and places.</p> <p>(a) Ensure local decision-makers and practitioners understand that recreation will influence health, and recommend creative ways of increasing physical activity in a low-cost manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recreation directors shared between (small) communities, schools, etc ➤ Community volunteers assisting recreation director to provide regular programs ➤ Equipment-recycling programs
<p>5. Support communities and regions by coordinating and connecting with national and provincial physical activity initiatives to maximize effort and effect.</p>	

EVALUATION GOAL: The Manitoba Physical Activity Action Plan implementation process will be monitored.

PROVINCIAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COMMITTEE	LOCAL COMMUNITY/REGIONAL COMMITTEES
<p>A status report of the Manitoba Physical Activity Action Plan implementation process is published annually for governments, community organizations, school divisions and boards, worksites and residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work Groups are established as necessary to carry out the monitoring and evaluation activities 	