



November 20, 2006

November 21 marks the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion

Toronto, Ontario - November 21, 2006 is a significant day for public health, community health and social services, in Canada and internationally. It marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, at the first World Health Organization (WHO) International Conference on Health Promotion in Ottawa, on November 21, 1986.

That conference happened because of growing pressure for a new international public health movement. Health promotion is about enabling people to gain control over and improve their health and it goes way beyond just health care. "The Ottawa Charter is an important guidepost for our work. It puts health squarely on the agenda of policy makers in all sectors and at all levels", says Connie Clement, Executive Director of the Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse, Ontario's leading bilingual health promotion organization.

Despite regularly landing in the United Nations' top five or ten countries, in terms of social development, Canada has more work to do to improve health for all. For example, Canada's deplorable record on the health of its Aboriginal people is criticized internationally. Canada still has one in six children living in poverty. And, we waste millions treating chronic diseases instead of investing to prevent them.

"Our goals are the same today as they were 20 years ago, says Suzanne Jackson, Director of the Centre for Health Promotion at the University of Toronto, a WHO Collaborating Centre in Health Promotion, "We need to build healthy public policy, create supportive environments, strengthen community action, develop personal skills and reorient health services. All of these actions must go hand in hand in order to create healthier individuals and communities both in Canada and abroad."

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For more information please click on this link to read an OP-Ed article prepared by OPC on this topic.
