

Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance Pre-Budget Consultations

August 2017

Executive Summary

Sport Matters Group (SMG) is a coalition of over 80 sport, physical activity and recreation organizations who believe that a values-based, ethical sport experience taking place in safe, inclusive and welcoming environments, along with regular and accessible physical activity and facilities required to participate are integral to Canadian culture and the development of our people, communities and nation. Representatives of high performance sport, proponents of active, healthy living initiatives and sport and recreation infrastructure improvements have all collaborated to bring this submission and its recommendations to your attention.

This submission will highlight the recent investments made by the federal government that support Canadians (able-bodied and those with a disability) wanting to be active as well as those pursuing high performance endeavours – with an overall goal of improving health, wellness and excellence through participation in sport and physical activity. It will also identify ongoing and emerging issues and reinforce the role of physical activity to the health of Canadians and how increased investment in physical activity programs will ultimately reduce health care costs across both provincial and federal health care budgets.

Federal, provincial and territorial (F-P/T) Ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation approved the Canadian Sport Policy in 2012 as a roadmap that establishes direction and desired outcomes for sport in Canada through 2022. At their 2017 conference, Ministers acknowledged the importance of a Common Vision on physical activity for governments, organizations and leaders from across sectors to help ensure all Canadians are active and to reduce sedentary living.

Sport Matters to Canadians

A new generation of Canadian children were inspired by the outstanding performances of Team Canada at the 2016 Rio Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. As participation in sport declines¹ watching our Olympians and Paralympians compete at the highest levels is a key part of the solution to seeing that trend reversed while helping to instill a sense of national pride – in 2010, 90% of Canadians said the performance of our athletes at the Vancouver Games had a positive impact on Canadian pride².

The impact of sport on productivity

A major study, commissioned by a professional services recruitment and talent management consultancy, Hudson, and conducted by The Social Issues Research Centre (SIRC) in the United Kingdom, revealed that sport – conversations between staff and customers, managers and staff, men and woman – can have a positive impact

¹ Community Foundations of Canada, True Sport Foundation, Vital Signs, Sport and Belonging 2015
<http://communityfoundations.ca/sportandbelonging>

² Sport Matters Group (2011). Sport 2.0: Towards A New Era in Canadian Sport
http://sportmatters.ca/sites/default/files/content/sport_2.0_towards_a_new_era_2.0_smg.pdf

on boosting morale and improving mood, motivation and productivity in the work environment³.

- 63% of men and 52% of women said that sporting success has an impact on their approach to work;
- 47% of women and 40% of men said that sporting success lifts their mood and makes them more productive in their jobs;
- a fifth of men said sport increases their motivation at work compared to 12% of women/
- Only 3% said that sporting success is distracting and makes them less productive.

Additionally, respondents indicated that an event such as the football World Cup has an impact on their working lives – by boosting morale if their team does well, creating team spirit and providing an environment for social inclusion. Respondents also indicated that ‘talking sport’ is a way of breaking down barriers, that sport enhances creativity and promotes sharing of ideas.

71% of men and 68% of women said that employers and employees can learn valuable lessons from sport: the value of working as a team; identifying and influencing what makes a good team player; the importance of commitment and dedication; the importance of collective responsibility; how talents can be developed and performance maximized; and the value of individual flair and creativity.

Being actively involved in sport was also perceived as a good motivator – sport can act as a powerful method of team bonding. Approximately one third (33%) of women and 36% of men believe that sponsoring staff who specialize in sport would achieve these goals.

Canadians can relate to these research results when reminiscing about Sidney Crosby’s golden goal in Men’s Hockey final at the 2010 Winter Olympics or Penny Oleksiak’s incredible accomplishments at the 2016 Summer Olympics.

Strategic investments

We would like to acknowledge the significant investments made by the federal government over the past year to support Canadian athlete’s chances for success. The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities has worked diligently with the sport community to identify opportunities, collaborate on solutions, and overcome challenges within the sector.

We applaud the \$25 million additional money over the next five years (and ongoing thereafter) to the Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) that was included in the 2017 federal budget. The last increase in the monthly stipends was in 2004. The Sport Matters Group in collaboration with athlete commissions from the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Committees as well as AthletesCAN made this a top priority through our submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and the Minister of Finance in 2016 where an increase of 24% (\$6.72 million per year) was suggested.

The 2017 Budget also committed to \$18.9 million over the next five years and an additional \$5.5 million every four years thereafter to support Indigenous youth and sport. The funding will increase support for culturally relevant sport programming at the community level and is also intended to strengthen Indigenous leadership and ensure the national sport system is more inclusive of Indigenous Peoples through training and collaboration with National Sport Organizations. It will also establish stable, ongoing funding for the North American Indigenous Games.

³ Hudson, Social Issues Research Centre, The impact of sport on the workplace, June 2006, http://www.sirc.org/publik/sport_and_the_workplace.pdf

Sport and recreation infrastructure was also provided a budget boost through an additional \$1.8 billion to the Social Infrastructure budget over the coming ten years. It is planned that \$1.3 billion of that will be distributed through bilateral agreements. This is in addition to funds previously committed in the 2016 Budget and the 2016 Economic Update. The Trans-Canada Trail will also receive funding of \$30 million over the next 5 years to complete, enhance and maintain the Trail.

On June 22, 2017, Sport Canada published the findings of the review of its targeted excellence approach. The findings provide insight on Canada's high-performance sport system that will help align and improve Targeted Excellence, by focusing on longer-term sustainable technical and financial support and the development of high-performance sport in Canada. Four priorities and next steps have been identified including finding a balance between a targeted approach and sport development within the high-performance system; looking for ways to create sustainability within the high-performance system; creating better alignment across the high-performance system; and, address inefficiencies and other issues within the current approach.

On July 21st, 2017, Minister Qualtrough, announced funding for the next generation of Olympic and Paralympic athletes. Working with the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), the Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) and their respective foundations, a total of up to \$10 million in ongoing, annual funding—\$5 million from the Government of Canada, \$4 million from the COC and \$1 million from the CPC—will support Olympic and Paralympic athletes who have demonstrated medal potential for the subsequent Olympic or Paralympic Games. The investment is designed to support additional coaches, improve the daily training environments of athletes, and invest in sport science and sport medicine services.

Ongoing and Emerging Issues

In a survey conducted earlier this year by Sport Matters, 111 organizations provided feedback on several issues. One of the most common issues raised by national and multi-sport organizations is organizational capacity and lack of support for talent management. The number of priorities and requirements of the Sport Canada Sport Support Program has increased but the funding envelope has not increased since 2009 despite more organizations trying to access funding. Organizations are required to do more but the budgets for hiring and developing staff are limited. The sport sector relies heavily on volunteers but the common trend in Canada is reduced rates of volunteerism. The total number of volunteers in Canada was lower in 2013 than in 2010 (12.7 and 13.2 million, respectively). This translates into a 4.0% decline in the total number of Canadian volunteers, even though the population aged 15 years and older increased by about one million during the same period (+3.5 %)⁴.

Ethical conduct of sport remains top of mind for leaders across the Canadian sport system. Doping remains the single biggest threat to sport at the national and international level. The sport sector also experiences pervasive threats such as violence, harassment and the sideline behaviour of parents, in addition to obscure threats such as gambling and match fixing. Prejudices, such as homophobia and racism continues to exist. Sport organizations are also learning how to accommodate unique needs of LGBTQ participants.

Operating costs for sport programming are rising. Whether it is the increasing cost of hydro required to operate local curling clubs or the lack of revenue generation opportunities due to sensitivities in marketing to children and youth, community sport clubs are experiencing daily pressure to create opportunities for children and youth to participate in sport while keeping the cost of programming accessible and affordable.

⁴ Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2015001-eng.htm>

Physical Activity

Physical activity is key to a healthier, more prosperous Canada. Unfortunately, Canadians of all ages are not moving their bodies enough to get the benefits of regular physical activity, which include reduced risk of diseases like type 2 diabetes and some cancers, better scores in reading and math, better fitness, more fun, healthy body weight, self-confidence, new skills and better mental health.⁵

Physical inactivity costs Canadian taxpayers approximately \$6.8 billion a year. The Canadian Institute of Actuaries (2013) warns that by the year 2037, assuming a 3.5% annual increase, provincial operating budgets will spend 69% on health care, up from 44% in 2013. More Canadians becoming more active is part of the solution to this.

If we could get a mere 10 per cent of Canadian adults to sit less and move more, we would reduce Canada's health-care costs by \$2.6 billion and inject \$7.5 billion into the Canadian economy by the year 2040.⁶ Plus, we would reduce chronic disease and save 6,600 lives by 2020 alone. 85% of Canadians agree that governments should devote a greater percentage of the health-care budget to preventive measures.⁷

Additionally, when used intentionally sport plays a significant role in strengthening communities through crime reduction, newcomer integration, Aboriginal youth engagement, economic revitalization and citizen participation.

As outlined in the new Common Vision, the federal-provincial/territorial framework for increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary living, raising awareness of the dangers of sitting too much and moving too little is not enough to change lifestyles. To get Canadians to change, it is essential to create a social climate in Canada where habitual physical activity is part of the daily fabric of our lives. People are more likely to be active if it is seen as 'normal,' and if their friends and peers are also active.

Recommendation

That the federal government commit financial resources over and above the existing funding dedicated to physical activity initiatives, to support the proposed strategic imperatives outlined in the Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada.

⁵ Active Healthy Kids Canada. 2013 Report Card on Physical Activity and Youth. Are We Driving Our Kids to Unhealthy Habits? Colley, R.C., Garriguet, D., Janssen, I., Craig, C.L., Clarke, J., & Tremblay, M.S. (2011). Physical activity of Canadian Adults: Accelerometer data from the 2007to2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey. Statistics Canada, Health Reports, 22 (1), Catalogue no. 82-003-XPE

⁶ Fares Bounajm, Thy Dinh, Louis Theriault Moving Ahead: The Economic Impact of Reducing Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour. The Conference Board of Canada, October 24, 2014

⁷ Public Health Leadership Council. (2013) Make No Little Plans: Ontario's Public Health Sector Strategic Plan. Retrieved from http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/make_no_little_plans/docs/make_no_little_plans.pdf