

Consultation on the Draft Protocols for the Draft Ontario Public Health Standards

CHNIG response for OPHA

Nutritious Food Basket Protocol

1. How can the content of this protocol be improved to explain how the applicable requirements in the draft Ontario Public Health Standards should be operationalized?

2. How can the structure of this protocol be improved to make it easier to understand? (e.g., Does it flow in a logical sequence? Is it well organized?)

3. How can the language and terminology of this protocol be improved to be more appropriate, clear, and concise? Please provide suggestions for alternative terminology if appropriate.

4. What (if any) are the gaps or inaccuracies in this protocol? Are there any missing elements? What (if any) areas do not align with accepted guidelines or evidence-based practices?

This protocol is an essential tool to help monitor food affordability and the urgent problem of food insecurity in Ontario. The gap or chasm is the on-going disconnect between identification of the cost of food (and other essentials such as housing and heat) and the dangerously low social assistance rates and minimum wages of the most vulnerable Ontarians. Toronto Public Health, for example, reported in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007 that "many low and/or fixed income residents have to choose between paying the rent and buying food." Just as we would act once an outbreak of infectious disease or environmental hazard was identified, this protocol must link with action to ameliorate this severe threat to health and well-being.

5. Reflecting on your responses to the previous four questions, please prioritize the top three changes that are required for this protocol to be finalized.

6. Any other comments?