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Petition Urges Ontario to Make Food & Nutrition Compulsory

*****<http://www.care2.com/go/z/OHEA>*****

*A Care2 petition from the Ontario Home Economics Association
has gathered more than 1,000 signatures*

OTTAWA, ONTARIO -- The Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA) is calling on the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to make at least one food and nutrition course a requirement for students to complete their Ontario Secondary School Diploma. The Care2 petition has over **1200** signatures.

VIEW THE PETITION HERE: <http://www.care2.com/go/z/OHEA>

The OHEA wants to ensure all students receive food education to help them make informed decisions about what they eat. One in three Canadian children and youth are overweight or obese -- a threefold increase in the past 30 years, according to recently published research in the journal BMC Pediatrics.

Hospitals that treat severe childhood obesity, like the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa, report long waiting lists for children hoping to enter their programs. Doctors who specialize in treating childhood obesity have found an alarming number of preschoolers are overweight or obese -- some have difficulty moving and develop sleep-disordered breathing and sleep apnea.

As the OHEA says, "Ontario grads can be part of the solution to reduce the strain on healthcare by reducing risks of obesity, Type II diabetes and high blood pressure. They could save more of their hard-earned income by spending less on food and benefit from family time around the dinner table!"

Educating all students about food and nutrition choices is essential to help them lead healthy lifestyles, OHEA says. Today, few children learn to cook and prepare meals at home,. At the same time, they are bombarded with advertising urging them to eat fast food and highly processed foods. OHEA hopes a nutrition course will help students understand food labels, stick to a food budget, and reduce food waste -- these are life-time skills.

In 2013, the Ontario Ministry of Education released 20 new and revised Family Studies courses, several of which are related to food and nutrition. The OHEA's Care2 petition calls for these courses to be prioritized and to make healthy eating and food literacy a focus for all students.

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