

## OHS News

### *Ontario's doctors voice their support for the Ontario Health Study*

This summer, the [College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario](#) (CPSO) sent a survey to family physicians and general practitioners (GPs) on behalf of the OHS. Our response rate was good, and we were pleased to discover that 92.2% of doctors who responded support the idea of the Ontario Health Study. Furthermore, the percentage of family physicians and GPs who said they would take part in the Study was an encouraging 78.4%. Most of the responding doctors (78.6%) said that they would be willing to encourage their family and friends to participate in the Study, while 74.8% said they would discuss the OHS with their patients. Health concerns of most interest to physicians in Ontario included diabetes, obesity and physical activity, cancer, mental health and the impact of environmental factors. The OHS is addressing all of these topics. We'd like to thank the CPSO for helping us connect with the province's GPs and family doctors.



### *Welcome to the new and improved Ontario Health Study website!*

OHS staffers were busy this summer giving [OntarioHealthStudy.ca](http://OntarioHealthStudy.ca) an overhaul. Our rejuvenated site features video content, researcher biographies and a new Community section. The Community section is where you – our loyal supporters – can check out the latest news, find out when we'll be in your community and discover ways to share your enthusiasm for the Study and encourage others to take part. As of the end of October, we have recruited more than 43,000 participants. Please become an OHS Community Champion today and help us recruit even more Ontarians. To become a Community Champion, click [here!](#)

## OHS in the Community

The Ontario Health Study is hosting its first **Our Community Health Town Hall Event** in Peterborough on November 16. The evening will feature a presentation by Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, the Medical Officer of Health of the Peterborough County-City Health Unit. A panel of local and provincial experts will discuss health challenges in the community and ways to overcome them. Representatives from the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce, the Peterborough County-City Health Unit and the Peterborough Regional Health Centre will join Dr. Lyle Palmer, Executive Scientific Director of the OHS, for a thought-provoking discussion.

On a perfect autumn day, the OHS got the word out about the importance of the Study at this year's **The Word on the Street** festival. An estimated 220,000 people attended the popular book festival, held on the grounds of Queen's Park in Toronto on September 25. The OHS booth proved particularly popular thanks to enthusiastic staffers on hand to answer questions, hand out OHS pedometers and give interested attendees an overview of their weight, percentage of body fat and total body water using a machine that analyzes body composition.

## What's Next?

Part of the Study's optional follow-up includes inviting those who have completed the initial questionnaire to visit an assessment centre or community-based clinic to undergo comprehensive physical tests. These tests may include lung function, grip strength, bone health, resting heart rate and a whole body scan to look at body fat versus lean muscle. We would appreciate your input regarding our assessment centre and your potential participation, so we will be emailing you a brief survey soon. We're eager to hear what you have to say!



## OHS Featured Participant

The Ontario Health Study team gratefully acknowledges the contribution of our participant Sherrie. Here is one of the main reasons that she is taking part:

"Several members of my family living throughout Ontario have cancer. So I'd like to find out if there's a higher incidence of cancer in different parts of the province, and – if so – why. Is it due to the use of pesticides, is it pollution, is it their lifestyle? I'm interested in learning if there's some kind of connection between where people live and cancer."

Thank you for making a difference, Sherrie!

## Feature Article: OHS Community Supporters Step Up

All of Ontario's universities have endorsed and are supporting the Ontario Health Study, but [York University](#) has the distinction of being the first academic institution to actively recruit participants on behalf of the OHS.

The Ontario Health Study will have an active presence on York's campus soon thanks to the university's establishment of an OHS recruitment booth at one of its most-visited locations. Volunteers from the university will man the booth, where York staff, students and faculty can learn more about the Study and sign up to take part. The booth will be equipped with laptops so that those who are interested in registering for the Study can do so easily.

In addition to offering an on-site recruitment booth, York is promoting the Ontario Health Study by distributing promotional materials describing the Study and why it's important to the health of future generations. Posters displayed around campus feature actual York students – a first for the OHS!

Dr. Harvey Skinner, Dean of York's Faculty of Health, explains why the university is supporting the OHS: "We are encouraging members of the York University community to take part because we believe this Study will lead to significant discoveries down the line about keeping more people healthy. A study of this magnitude could very well result in the mobilization of knowledge into improved prevention and disease management." York faculty members serving on one of the Ontario Health Study's 31 scientific working groups are Christopher Arden (Obesity & Physical Activity), Sherry Grace (Psychosocial Health), Jane Irvine (Cardiovascular Disease; Chair, Psychosocial Health), Jennifer Kuk (Obesity & Physical Activity) and Paul Ritvo (Psychosocial Health).

The [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health](#) (CAMH) is supporting the OHS by encouraging people who have participated in their Smoking Treatment for Ontario Patients (STOP) Study to take part in the OHS as well. The STOP Study is travelling to communities throughout the province (STOP on the Road), providing smoking cessation workshops for healthcare practitioners and clients. While they're doing this, CAMH and local volunteers are helping to promote the Ontario Health Study.

Our special thanks to both York University and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health for their support.