

Institute of Population and Public Health



## Applied Public Health Chair Impact Case Study

**Dr. Lise Gauvin**

### Writing a charter for a healthier, more active world



#### Research Focus

Leading an active lifestyle has an incredible range of benefits. It promotes physical and mental health and well being, prevents disease, improves quality of life, and contributes to a healthy economy and environment. Communities that support physical activity in people of all ages—in a variety of settings and in ways that are both accessible and affordable—realize many of these benefits.

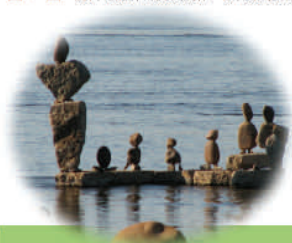
Dr. Lise Gauvin, Applied Public Health Chair, has spent years studying the influence of social inequality and environmental and policy factors on physical activity in different populations. Her knowledge and experience in this area led to her involvement in an international effort to inform decision-makers about the many benefits of promoting physical activity.

This effort resulted in the development of the Toronto Charter for Physical Activity, a call to all the countries, regions, and communities of the world to strive for greater political and social support for health-enhancing physical activity.

#### Research Impact: Making a Difference

The Charter was developed under the auspices of the Global Advocacy for Physical Activity (GAPA) Council of the International Society for Physical Activity and Health and the Third International Congress on Physical Activity and Public Health. Dr. Gauvin co-chaired a team of international scholars, researchers, and policy-makers who wrote the Charter and provided administrative support and resources to the process, which involved several worldwide consultations.

In addition to offering guiding principles for efforts to increase physical activity levels globally, the Charter outlines four actions to help countries achieve this goal. They include 1) implementing a national policy and action plan, 2) introducing policies that support physical activity, 3) re-orienting services and funding to prioritize physical activity, and 4) developing partnerships for action.



A group of experts at the 20th International Union for Health Promotion and Education World Conference on Health Promotion in Geneva resolved to actively encourage the Charter's dissemination and uptake "as part of a health-promotion approach to addressing non-communicable disease, sustainability, and healthy cities and communities globally". More than 400 other individuals and organizations worldwide have also registered their support on-line.

The Charter has been translated into French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Thai, and there are plans to expand the list to include more than a dozen other languages in the near future. Although research into the connection between environment and physical activity is still at an early stage, this new advocacy tool will hopefully respond to the needs of public health systems and create momentum for physical activity promotion throughout the world.

### Want to Know More?

The Charter and information on how to use it can be found on the GAPA website ([www.globalpa.org.uk](http://www.globalpa.org.uk)). The Charter was also featured in an article in the July 2010 issue of the *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*.

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