

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ParticipACTION's First-Ever Adult Report Card Gives Canadians
a 'D' for Overall Physical Activity**

Research shows that even small steps can make a difference in helping adults stay strong in mind & body, maintain mobility and build relationships

TORONTO, **October 29, 2019** /CNW/ - ParticipACTION today released the first-ever Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults, giving adults living in Canada a “D” for overall physical activity. Even though 8 in 10 adults (83 per cent) think physical inactivity is a serious health issue, only 16 per cent meet the national guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each week.ⁱ

The Report Card shows 29 per cent of adults in Canada fall within the low active lifestyle category and adults 18 to 79 years old are sedentary for almost 10 hours per day.ⁱⁱ Sedentary time increases with age and older adults (65+) are spending the most time inactive. This is of major concern since physical inactivity can lead to increased risk of chronic diseases, cognitive decline, slips and falls and social isolation among older adults.ⁱⁱⁱ

“Our first Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults sheds light on the inactivity crisis among adults in Canada,” said Elio Antunes, President and CEO, ParticipACTION. “These report findings need to serve as a spark for change, and as a reminder that as we get older we must remain physically active so we can age better. Physical activity needs to be a vital part of everyday life for Canadians of all ages.”

For the first time in Canada’s history, adults over the age of 65 make up a larger percentage of our population than those aged 15 and under.^{iv} Caring for our aging population is increasingly falling on the “sandwich generation”, adults in their 40s, 50s and 60s who have to balance their needs with those of their aging parents and their children. Of the more than 8 million Canadians who are caregivers, 50 per cent are between the ages of 45-65.^v

“Any movement is good movement, at any age -- in particular, for adults and older adults,” said Report Card Research Committee Chair Nora Johnston, MA. “What became clear in the Report Card findings is that physical activity needs to become more of a priority. You can’t stop aging, but you can age better with physical activity.”

Canadians in the “sandwich generation” along with their aging parents can and should be doing more to get active – to stay healthy as they age and be an example for their children. The good news is 74 per cent of adults in Canada say they have strong intentions to be physically active within the next six months.^{vi} Now it’s time to take action!

The Adult Report Card highlights three key benefits of regular physical activity that help older Canadians Age Better:

1. **Staying on your feet:** As we age, natural changes like slowed reaction times and decreased muscle and bone strength contribute to an increase in slips and falls. Engaging in activities like strength training or tai chi can help you meet the weekly

activity guidelines while improving balance, core strength and stability, which help prevent falls.^{vii}

- 2. Staying cognitively strong:** Age is the primary risk factor for dementia and a recent report projects that it will affect close to 1.4 million adults in Canada by 2031. Research shows that being physically active can help protect against the onset of dementia and slow its progression. Regular brain stimulation with physical activity can extend our years of strong brain health.^{viii}
- 3. Staying connected:** 1 in 5 adults in Canada experience some level of loneliness or isolation and older adults are at higher risk due to a lack of mobility and shrinking social networks. Making time to get active each day with others builds social connections and enhances community engagement.^{ix}

With the proportion of older adults (65+) in Canada growing faster than ever before, the toll of physical inactivity will be felt on our healthcare system, our communities and the economy more heavily than we've ever experienced. As of 2012, the estimated direct, indirect and total health-care costs of physical inactivity among adults living in Canada were \$2.4 billion, \$4.3 billion and \$6.8 billion, respectively.

Small steps can make a big difference:

Everything gets better when you get active, including how we age. Whether you want to [Age Better](#), Sleep Better, Think Better, Poop Better, or another one of the many "[betters](#)" that come with regular physical activity, it's never too late to start sitting less and moving more. Some simple ways to start, include:

- Move more throughout the day – be it active transportation, daily chores, gardening, or walking the family pet.
- Try something new – and once you find an activity you like, stick with it.
- Up the intensity – try to do the same task or walk the same path in less time each time you do it – bonus if you can add an incline or steps.
- Ask others to join in – make it social.
- Break up extended periods of sitting with movement – make it a "walking meeting" at work or a "moving moment" during a commercial break.
- Add strength training to your routine 2-3 times a week.

Visit ParticipACTION.com to see the full Adult Report Card and learn how physical activity can help all Canadians Age Better. And, download the ParticipACTION app for extra support and motivation to fit physical activity into your busy life – it's a small step that can make a big difference

About ParticipACTION

ParticipACTION is a national non-profit organization that helps Canadians sit less and move more. Originally established in 1971, ParticipACTION works with its partners, which include sport, physical activity, recreation organizations, government and corporate sponsors, to make physical activity a vital part of everyday life. ParticipACTION is generously supported by the Government of Canada. For more information, please visit ParticipACTION.com.

About the ParticipACTION Report Card on Adult Physical Activity

Led by a team of Canadian researchers and stakeholders in the field of adult physical activity and sport, the [ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults](#) represents a

comprehensive synthesis of the literature and related national-level surveys. The Report Card assigns letter grades to 13 different indicators grouped into four categories: Daily Behaviours; Individual Characteristics; Settings & Sources of influence; and Strategies & investments. Highlights of other key grades include: Daily Movement (C); Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity (F); Sleep (B-); Community & Environment (B-); Health & Primary Care Settings (C-); and Strategies & Investments (B-). Some indicators resulted in an inconclusive grade as more research is needed and they include: muscle & bone strength; balance; sedentary behaviours; social support; and workplace. ParticipACTION relies on its strategic partners Centre for Active Living and the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, content partner Active Aging Canada and members of our Report Card Research Committee, to research, develop and communicate the Report Card.

The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults will be published every two years, alternating between its long-standing [ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth](#). The two Report Cards will create a family of Report Cards – together, the most comprehensive assessment of physical activity in Canada. The Reports will prompt new research, investments as well as influence programs and policies.

For further information, copies of the ParticipACTION Adult Report Card or to schedule an interview please contact: Sheba Zaidi, Proof Inc. szaidi@getproof.com

ⁱ Statistics Canada. (2018). Canada's population estimates: Age and sex, July 1, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/190125/dq190125a-eng.pdf?st=i9K61otd>

ⁱⁱ ParticipACTION. Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/resources/adult-report-card>

ⁱⁱⁱ ParticipACTION. Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults. (2019).

^{iv} Statistics Canada. (2018). Canada's population estimates: Age and sex, July 1, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/190125/dq190125a-eng.pdf?st=i9K61otd>

^v Carers Canada. Carer Facts. Retrieved from <https://www.carerscanada.ca/carers-facts/>

^{vi} ParticipACTION. Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults. (2019).

^{vii} ParticipACTION. Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults. (2019).

^{viii} ParticipACTION. Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults. (2019).

^{ix} ParticipACTION. Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults. (2019).