

## MEDIA RELEASE

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**CK Public Health Shines Light on Food Insecurity**

CK Public Health is shining a light on the pressing issue of food insecurity in the community through the release of the 2024 Cost of Eating in CK infographic. The data reveals that at least 1 in 5 households in Chatham-Kent struggle to afford nutritious food.

In response to these findings, and in alignment with other Ontario municipalities, the Board of Health passed a motion authorizing the Chair of the CK Food Policy Council to bring a notice of motion to CK Municipal Council advocating the Federal Government for support of a basic income guarantee and the passage of Senate Bill S-233. The motion passed at the December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 council meeting.

Carmen McGregor, Chair of the Chatham-Kent Food Policy Council, emphasizes the harsh reality faced by those living with food insecurity in Chatham-Kent: "People must choose between paying for housing or paying for food. In Canada, a staggering 70% of households relying on social assistance are experiencing food insecurity. An adequate and secure income is a crucial solution to reduce these rates."

"Mere survival is not sufficient," says Dr. Shanker Nesathurai, Acting Medical Officer of Health for CK Public Health. "The public health service wants every person in Chatham-Kent to thrive. This requires public policies that provide every household sufficient income. Guaranteed basic income is a first step".

Food insecurity is defined as the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints. The inability to afford food not only impacts physical health but also takes a toll on mental well-being, increasing the risk of conditions such as anxiety and depression.

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**Photo Cutline:** Dr Shanker Nesathurai, Acting Medical Officer of Health for CK Public Health and Sharmini Balakrishnan, CK Public Health Nutritionist, showcase a basket of food containing some of the items included in the Nutritious Food Basket, a survey used by Public Health Units in Ontario to monitor the affordability of a nutritious diet based on the 2019 Canada's Food Guide.

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