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## **HEALTH COMMITTEE LAUNCHES YOUTH-FOCUSED WEBSITE, CONTEST TO GET IDEAS FROM YOUTH ABOUT SOLVING CHILDHOOD OBESITY**

VICTORIA — In what is a first for a legislative committee, the BC Health Committee has launched [www.myhealthyspace.ca](http://www.myhealthyspace.ca), a website aimed specifically at youth to get their ideas about solving the childhood obesity crisis facing British Columbia.

The Select Standing Committee on Health, an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly, has been assigned to find effective strategies to change behaviours to get children and youth to eat healthier, improve their health and increase their physical fitness. They have been hearing from expert witnesses over the last year, but now they want to hear from the kids themselves, so they've launched [www.myhealthyspace.ca](http://www.myhealthyspace.ca), as well as hosting a drawing contest and holding regional meetings at high schools.

"We've heard many fine ideas about tackling the childhood obesity epidemic in our province from experts, but we have to also get kids involved in the process to be sure we can make recommendations that will work for them," says Ralph Sultan MLA, Chair of the Committee. "Childhood obesity can only be solved through real social change, and real change requires buy-in from everyone – parents, doctors, educators, and kids too."

[Myhealthyspace.ca](http://Myhealthyspace.ca) is a fun, colourful website with a youth focus. There is an animated video, a fun quiz, a web-log ('Blogging with the Big Guy') where youth can comment on what experts have told the Committee, and a more formal survey for youth to offer input for the Committee's final report.

"We set up both formal and informal ways for youth to tell us what they think of the issue to give everyone a chance to give us feedback," says David Cubberley, MLA, Deputy Chair. "We expect a lot of youth are going to enjoy telling legislators how we should help get kids to eat healthy and get more physical activity."

To engage younger children, the Committee has also created a drawing contest for elementary school kids ([www.myhealthyspace.ca/contest.asp](http://www.myhealthyspace.ca/contest.asp)). Children can submit an original drawing depicting their ideas to get kids more healthy and active. One winner from each grade (K-7) will be chosen, with the grand prize winner's artwork reproduced on the Committee's final report.

The Health Committee also plans to travel to four regions in October to hold hearings at high schools, to allow the MLAs to hear directly from BC youth and others in their communities.

The Health Committee announced these youth-focused consultations today at an event at Reynolds Secondary School, the first high school in Greater Victoria to put healthy food in its

vending machines. MLAs brought students fruit for a healthy snack, and joined them for physical activity after the announcement.

For more information, visit [www.myhealthyspace.ca](http://www.myhealthyspace.ca).

The members of the Select Standing Committee on Health are:

Ralph Sultan, MLA, West Vancouver-Capilano (Chair)	John Nuraney, MLA, Burnaby – Willingdon
David Cubberley, MLA, Saanich South (Deputy Chair)	Val Roddick, MLA, Delta South
Katrine Conroy, MLA, West Kootenay - Boundary	Michael Sather, MLA, Maple Ridge – Pitt Meadows
Dave S. Hayer, MLA, Surrey – Tynehead	Katherine Whittred, MLA, North Vancouver - Lonsdale
Daniel Jarvis, MLA, North Vancouver - Seymour	Charlie Wyse, MLA, Cariboo South

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Information about the committee's work and transcripts of hearings can be found on its website at <http://www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/health>, by contacting any committee member, or by contacting:

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