



By email and post
CC: David Cameron
CC: Francis Maude
CC: Anne Milton

Rt Hon Andrew Lansley MP
Secretary of State for Health
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Professor Graham MacGregor
Consensus Action on Salt and Health
Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine
Charterhouse Square
London EC1M 6BQ
Telephone: 020 7882 6217
www.actiononsalt.org.uk

11th August 2010

Dear Andrew,

**Reducing salt intakes will save billions of pounds.
The £15 million spent over the last 5 years on salt reduction is saving £1.5 billion a year in health care costs.**

This letter briefly outlines why it is so important that the Coalition government support and enhance the highly successful salt reduction policy and concludes with a request for a meeting with the Ministers.

I am writing to you representing the UK's key health charities, all of whom have an interest in reducing the UK's salt intake, to express our concerns about the future of the salt reduction policy following the move of the Nutrition Division of the Food Standards Agency to the Department of Health.

The UK population's daily salt intake has already fallen by nearly 10% (from 9.5g to 8.6g per day) since the policy began in 2004. This reduction has mainly come about as a result of a voluntary code of practice for industry, led by the Food Standards Agency. The recent NICE Public Health Guidelines on the prevention of cardiovascular disease (CVD) estimated that the campaigns, which have cost just £15 million since the voluntary agreement came into force in 2004, have prevented approximately 6,000 CVD deaths per year, saving the UK economy approximately £1.5 billion per year [1]. As the benefits of salt reduction can be seen down to an intake of 3g salt a day, for every additional 1 gram of salt removed from our diets there will be a further £1.5 billion saving every year.

The UK has pioneered a very successful salt reduction policy which is now being replicated worldwide in e.g. the USA, Australia and Canada, as well as many European countries. This policy now has the full backing of the World Health Organisation who has published papers demonstrating that salt reduction is as effective in CVD prevention as smoking cessation and considerably more cost effective. Worldwide, it is forecast that 2.5 million deaths a year would be prevented if salt intake is reduced to the recommended levels.

We look to you to secure a commitment to salt reduction both in the White Paper on public health due in the autumn and in the public health outcomes framework being developed for the White Paper.

We request a meeting with you at the earliest opportunity to put forward the case for continuing to support and enhance the highly successful salt reduction program as part of the Government's public health priorities and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely



Graham MacGregor
Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine at the Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine and Chairman of CASH

Signed on behalf of the following health charities:



The campaign for better public sector food



[1] NICE Guidance on the prevention of cardiovascular disease at the population level. June 2010
<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH25>