



It's Time to Make Cycling Safer: Ontario's Doctors

Toronto, August 10, 2011 The most recent report on cycling injuries revealed that in 2009, there were 26,000 emergency department visits and over 1,300 hospitalizations in Ontario. With increasing interest in cycling across the province, Ontario's doctors are urging the provincial government to make cyclists' safety a priority.

Dr. Stewart Kennedy, President of the Ontario Medical Association, released a comprehensive and in-depth report, "**Enhancing Cycling Safety in Ontario**," before he cycled through downtown Toronto to raise money for the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Big Bike event. The report included a number of recommendations aimed at increasing cyclists' safety. Among the recommendations, Ontario's doctors are calling for:

- The provincial government to develop policy and programs, including funding, to facilitate safe cycling, and for municipal governments to redouble their efforts to build much-needed cycling infrastructure;
- Connected networks of roads with paved shoulders in rural settings, to allow for the much needed separation between cyclists and fast-travelling vehicles on rural roads;
- The Ontario Drivers' Manual to be revised to include a comprehensive section on vehicle-bicycle interaction, and furthermore that the Ontario's Drive Test include this in the examination of new drivers;
- Ongoing delivery of bicycle safety education for young children through such programs as Can-Bike, and that such training be mandatory for all Ontario primary school students; and
- Education material for both drivers and cyclists that emphasizes intersection-specific dangers.

A safer environment for cycling is crucial to creating a healthier population. Ontario's doctors want to make sure that Ontarians feel safe when riding their bicycles.

For the complete list of recommendations from "**Enhancing Cycling Safety in Ontario**" please visit www.oma.org

Quotes

"Two-thirds of Canadians are inactive, putting them at greater risk of chronic disease. Cycling is a great a way to stay fit and a way for people of all ages to add essential physical activity to their daily lives and improve their health."

Stewart Kennedy, MD, President of the Ontario Medical Association



“The debate about bicycle infrastructure is so often politically driven, but should really be about the health of the population and safety of those who choose to cycle. Ontario’s doctors are committed to working with the province and municipalities to create a safer Ontario for our cyclists.”

Stewart Kennedy, MD, President of the Ontario Medical Association

Quick Facts

- Annually more than 2,000 cyclists are injured in vehicle-bicycle collisions alone;
- 68 per cent of car-bike collisions happen at intersections and these most frequently involve children riding off of the sidewalk; and
- In the past five years cycling fatalities from these collisions have averaged 20 per year.

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