

November 21, 2019

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed  
Chair, Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly  
Room 271  
Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 1A8  
[kaleed.rasheedco@pc.ola.org](mailto:kaleed.rasheedco@pc.ola.org)

**Re: Support for Bill 60, establishing a Social Assistance Research Commission**

Dear Mr. Rasheed:

The Middlesex-London Board of Health commends the Ontario Legislature for referring *Bill 60, An Act to amend the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish the Social Assistance Research Commission*, to the Standing Committee on Legislative Assembly. We strongly urge the Committee to hear Bill 60.

As demonstrated by the Nutritious Food Basket survey results, conducted annually by most Ontario public health units, Ontario individuals and families receiving social assistance do not have adequate income to meet a basic standard of living. The gap between income and the cost of basic needs has increased over time as social assistance rates have not kept pace with inflation and varies across Ontario with the varying local cost of basic needs.

Social determinants of health, such as income, food, housing and employment, help explain the wide health inequalities in Ontario, and are strongly determined by government public policy decisions. The annual recommendation of social assistance rates based on local cost of basic needs, as included in Bill 60, could improve incomes for people on social assistance, which would substantially improve health and reduce health care costs. Accurate, regional and annual data is also needed to raise awareness about income adequacy for health equity.

Please find attached the 2019 Middlesex-London Nutritious Food Basket survey results, included within Report No. 070-19, *“Monitoring Food Affordability and Implications for Government Public Policy”*. These reports provide an overview of local income adequacy and opportunities for community action to help ensure all Middlesex-London residents have access to a nutritious, adequate and culturally acceptable diet.

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We support the enactment of Bill 60 into law and look forward to it being heard by the Committee in the near future. Thank you for your consideration and commitment to the health and well-being of all Ontarians.

Sincerely,

Trish Fulton, Chair  
Middlesex-London Board of Health

cc:

Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Hon. Christine Elliot, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health  
Hon. Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services  
Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim, Legislative Clerk, Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly  
Ms. Rima Berns-McGown, MPP Beaches-East York, Critic for Poverty and Homelessness  
Hon. Jeff Yurek, MPP Elgin-Middlesex-London  
Hon. Monte McNaughton, MPP Lambton-Kent-Middlesex  
Mr. Terence Kernaghan, MPP London North Centre  
Ms. Peggy Sattler, MPP London West  
Ms. Teresa Armstrong, MPP London-Fanshawe

*Attachment – Report No. 070-19, “Monitoring Food Affordability and Implications for Government Public Policy and Action”*