

## **CORRESPONDENCE – September 2020**

- a) Date: 2020 July 16  
Topic: Masks Indoors at Public Places  
From: Community Member  
To: Board of Health, Middlesex-London Health Unit

***Background:***

On July 16, 2020, a community member wrote to the Middlesex-London Health Unit Board of Health urging leadership to influence mandating the use of masks in indoor public spaces in our community to help fight COVID-19.

***Recommendation:*** Receive.

- b) Date: 2020 July 16  
Topic: Endorsement of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies' Response to the Public Health Modernization Discussion Paper  
From: Renfrew County and District Health Unit  
To: Christine Elliott, Minister of Health

***Background:***

On July 16, 2020, the Board of Health for Renfrew County District Health Unit wrote to Minister Elliott in support of Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit's endorsement of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies' response to the Public Health Modernization Discussion Paper.

***Recommendation:*** Receive.

- c) Date: 2020 July 16  
Topic: Endorsement of correspondence regarding the 2020 Municipal Cost Share of Public Health Funding from Eastern Ontario Health Unit and correspondence regarding COVID-19 and Reconsiderations Related to Public Health Modernization from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
From: Renfrew County and District Health Unit  
To: Christine Elliott, Minister of Health

***Background:***

On July 16, 2020, the Board of Health for Renfrew County District Health Unit wrote to Minister Elliott in support of Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit's endorsement of correspondence regarding the 2020 Municipal Cost Share of Public Health Funding from Eastern Ontario Health Unit. Renfrew County District Health Unit also endorses correspondence regarding COVID-19 and reconsiderations related to Public Health Modernization from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies. Refer to correspondence item h) in the [July 16, 2020 Board of Health agenda](#).

***Recommendation:*** Receive.

- d) Date: 2020 July 16  
Topic: London needs mandatory indoor mask mandate

From: Community Member  
To: Board of Health, Middlesex-London Health Unit

***Background:***

On July 16, 2020, a community member wrote to the Middlesex-London Health Unit Board of Health in support for a mandatory indoor mask mandate in the city of London.

***Recommendation:*** Receive.

e) Date: 2020 July 16  
Topic: Mandatory masks – a request for thoughtful consideration and prompt action  
From: Community Member  
To: Board of Health, Middlesex-London Health Unit

***Background:***

On July 16, 2020, a community member wrote to the Middlesex-London Health Unit Board of Health requesting that leadership influence mandating the use of masks in indoor public spaces in the community to help fight COVID-19.

***Recommendation:*** Receive.

f) Date: 2020 July 16  
Topic: Mandatory masking from a home mask maker  
From: Community Member  
To: Board of Health, Middlesex-London Health Unit

***Background:***

On July 16, 2020, a community member wrote to the Middlesex-London Health Unit Board of Health regarding mandating the use of masks in indoor public spaces.

***Recommendation:*** Receive.

g) Date: 2020 July 17  
Topic: Make Masks Mandatory  
From: Community Member  
To: Board of Health, Middlesex-London Health Unit

***Background:***

On July 17, 2020, a community member wrote to the Middlesex-London Health Unit Board of Health regarding the concern over not making a mandatory mask policy in all indoor public places in London-Middlesex.

***Recommendation:*** Receive.

h) Date: 2020 July 27  
Topic: Basic Income for Income Security during COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

From: Municipality of Chatham-Kent  
To: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, and Minister Bill Bourne

***Background:***

On July 27, 2020, the Board of Health for Chatham-Kent wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau, Minister Freeland and Minister Bourne endorsing that the federal government transition the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) into basic income for all Canadians during the COVID-19 response and beyond. The Board recommends that immediate action be taken to evolve CERB into legislation as an effective long-term response to the issues of income security, poverty, food insecurity, and overall community health and well-being.

***Recommendation:*** Receive.

- i) Date: 2020 July 30  
Topic: The Decriminalization of Personal Possession of Illicit Drugs  
From: Municipality of Chatham-Kent  
To: Honourable Patty Hajdu, Honourable David Lametti

***Background:***

On July 27, 2020, the Board of Health for Chatham-Kent wrote to Minister Hadju and Minister Lametti endorsing the decriminalization of personal possession of illicit drugs in pursuit of a public health approach to drug policy. The Board of Health for Chatham-Kent calls on the federal government to create a national task force to research drug policy reform.

***Recommendation:*** Receive.

- j) Date: 2020 August 19  
Topic: COVID-19 Extraordinary Expenses  
From: Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit  
To: Minister, Christine Elliott

***Background:***

On August 19, 2020, the Board of Health for Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit wrote to Minister Elliott requesting additional funding to enable the success of the local public health response to the pandemic. The Board of Health for Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit urges the immediate provision of the funding allocations to local boards of health regarding the COVID-19 Extraordinary Expenses and for the School-Focused Nurses in order to enable a response by local public health units that is unobstructed by local financial shortfalls.

***Recommendation:*** Receive.



# Renfrew County and District Health Unit

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

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July 16, 2020

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health  
777 Bay Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3  
email: [christine.elliottco@ola.org](mailto:christine.elliottco@ola.org)

Dear Minister Elliott,

**Re: Endorsement of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies' Response to the Public Health Modernization Discussion Paper**

At the Regular Board meeting held on June 30, 2020, the Board of Health for the Renfrew County and District Health Unit unanimously agreed to support the following motion by the Board of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit:

"THAT the Association of Local Public Health Agencies' response to the Public Health Modernization Discussion Paper be endorsed and THAT a letter of support be sent to The Honourable Christine Elliott".

Sincerely,

Chair, Board of Health  
Renfrew County and District Health Unit

cc: Alison Blair, Executive Lead for Public Health Modernization  
Jim Pine, Special Advisor, Public Health Modernization  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies

June 19, 2020

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 777 Bay St.  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3  
(Sent via email to: [christine.elliottco@ola.org](mailto:christine.elliottco@ola.org))

Dear Minister Elliott

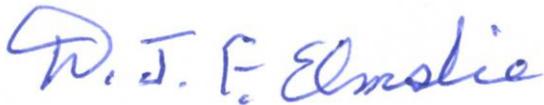
**RE: Endorsement of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies' Response to the Public Health Modernization Discussion Paper**

At its meeting held on June 18, 2020, the Board of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit passed the following motion:

“THAT the Association of Local Public Health Agencies' response to the Public Health Modernization Discussion Paper be endorsed and THAT a letter of support be sent to The Honourable Christine Elliott”.

Sincerely

BOARD OF HEALTH FOR THE HALIBURTON,  
KAWARTHA, PINE RIDGE DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT



Doug Elmslie  
Chair, Board of Health

DE/aln/ed

Cc (via email): Alison Blair, Executive Lead for Public Health Modernization  
Jim Pine, Special Advisor, Public Health Modernization  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)

Attachment

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The Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA) is pleased to present the following response to the [Public Health Modernization Discussion Paper](#). We invited our members to provide answers to the questions that are posed in the paper to help us identify themes common to the local public health sector throughout the province. This feedback has been synthesized and presented within the framework of themes and questions laid out in the consultation survey.

alPHA's response is intended to be complementary to the individual responses of its members, not a summary or a substitute. alPHA urges the Public Health Modernization team to take the unique local circumstances and perspectives presented in its members' and partners' direct feedback to the survey and in-person consultations into careful consideration as it formulates its advice to the Minister.

#### **PREAMBLE and PRINCIPLES**

alPHA agrees with the Ministry's vision of a "coordinated public health sector that is nimble, resilient, efficient and responsive to the province's evolving health priorities". alPHA also agrees with improving consistency where it makes sense to do so and improving clarity and alignment of the related roles and responsibilities of the province, Public Health Ontario (PHO), and local public health. alPHA certainly agrees that enhanced investment in health promotion and prevention will be critical to the success of Ontario's plan to end hallway health care.

In November of 2019, alPHA transmitted its [Statement of Principles for Public Health Modernization](#) to the Minister and the Public Health Modernization Team and these remain the foundation of alPHA's present response. These principles are incorporated into the responses to the survey questions as appropriate and the full document is attached.

The foundational principle is that any and all changes must serve the goal of strengthening the Ontario public health system's capacity to improve population health in all of Ontario's communities through the effective and efficient local delivery of evidence-based public health programs and services. Public health unit (PHU) realignments, identification of efficiencies, clarification of roles and strengthening of institutional relationships must all have that central aim as their starting point.

It must be recognized that Ontario already has an enviable public health system, based on a network of 34 PHUs with expert staff, strong partnerships and a clear and authoritative mandate to protect and promote health within their local communities. These are supported by the central research and evidence functions of PHO and the oversight of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) within the Ministry. Building on the Ontario system's existing strengths must be the strategic foundation for any proposed changes.

## Theme: Insufficient Capacity

### *What is currently working well in the public health sector?*

- Actions taken in response to the Walkerton and SARS crises in the early 2000s (e.g., increased provincial responsibility for funding, strengthened role of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), creation of PHO) have led to measurable improvements to the Ontario public health sector's capacity to detect and respond to emerging threats. The swift collective and thorough response to the developing Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) epidemic is a clear application by Ontario's public health sector of the lessons learned from the 2003 SARS outbreak.
- Ontario's public health sector is already an effective network of 34 local public health units (PHUs) with a strong and detailed mandate to identify and meet the health protection and promotion needs of their communities. That mandate is clearly spelled out in the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) and the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), with explicit flexibility built in to ensure that programs and services can be adapted according to local circumstances.
- Within each of the existing PHUs' boundaries, strong partnerships have been forged with local municipalities, social services, school boards and health care providers among others to support this work.
- The sector benefits from the collaborative work of province-wide professional (e.g., alpha, COMOH, ASPHIO, ODPH, OPHNL, APHEO) and topic-specific (e.g. TCAN, LDCCP) groups. These groups provide ongoing opportunities for collaboration and information exchange across PHU boundaries throughout Ontario.
- There is clear public and political recognition of the critical importance of investments in health protection and promotion to improving population health and ensuring the sustainability of the health care system.
- There is an invaluable range of professional, political and technical expertise resident in the public health sector (public health physicians, elected officials, epidemiologists, nurses, public health inspectors, health promoters, policy analysts, dentists, dietitians, business administrators, lawyers and highly skilled support staff).
- Local representation on boards of health (in a variety of models that includes elected municipal officials in all cases, with provincial appointees and citizen representatives serving in many) reflects community characteristics and values within the PHU boundary and provides direct accountability.
- Collaboration among PHUs including the development of consistency of practice (e.g., HIV case management, immunization enforcement in schools and child care centres, infection prevention and control inspections in the health care sector, electronic medical record use, records retention policies), mutual aid agreements, cross-coverage, outbreak management, and voluntary mergers (Southwestern and Huron-Perth).
- PHO is a unique and invaluable resource within the sector that has strong roles in research, professional development, ethics review, knowledge translation and response to emerging threats.

- The cost-sharing model provides the framework to ensure a stable and predictable source of adequate funding for public health programs and services while ensuring accountability at both the provincial and municipal levels.
- PHUs with large populations have budgets that allow them to deliver services efficiently and cost-effectively while also ensuring surge capacity.
- PHUs that are integrated with Regions (e.g., Halton, Durham) and cities (e.g., Toronto, Ottawa) benefit from support services (e.g. administrative, IT) embedded within those structures. This integration also facilitates coordination among public health, social services, emergency health services and public works.

***What are some changes that could be considered to address the variability in capacity in the current public health sector?***

- Formal mechanisms and commitment at both the provincial and municipal levels to ensure that the total annual public health funding envelope is stable, predictable, protected and sufficient to cover all costs for the full delivery of all public health programs and services in all PHUs whether they are mandated by the province or developed to serve unique local needs as authorized by Section 9 of the HPPA.
- Provincial support for voluntary mergers of PHUs with complementary characteristics where it can be demonstrated that functional capacity will be improved. Any realignments of present PHU boundaries must be considered only to ensure critical mass to efficiently and equitably deliver public health programs and services. As a general rule, existing PHUs should be left intact, particularly with regard to municipal boundaries, and complementary geographic, demographic and organizational characteristics should be key factors in deciding which mergers should be considered. Evidence about the relationship between critical population mass and the effective allocation of public health resources should also be examined.
- Enhance centralized provincial supports, to increase efficiency and the capacity of all public PHUs to deliver the full scope of the OPHS. PHO already has important research and evidence roles but is also well-positioned to coordinate the strengths of different PHUs. Provincial-level strategic and topic-specific advisory tables that include PHO, the CMOH and local public health leadership have also proven very useful in the past.
- In partnership with local public health, educational institutions and other relevant organizations, develop a provincial public health human resources strategy to build on the successful recruitment and retention of a skilled and competent public health workforce. Maintaining the visibility of the public health sector, demonstrating its stability and importance, presenting the wide range of opportunities within it, providing incentives to work in remote areas and keeping salaries competitive will be vital components.
- Increase decision-making flexibility at the local level to develop their own models for the provision of mandated services according to local circumstances and resources, as well as to develop more formal arrangements to share resources if surge capacity is needed (e.g. epidemiology, analysis, evaluation).

***What changes to the structure and organization of public health should be considered to address these challenges?***

- aPHa does not believe that systemic structural and organizational changes are necessary to address capacity challenges. As we have demonstrated in our answers to the other discussion questions, any capacity issues can be appropriately addressed within the existing framework by building on its strengths.
- Capacity for most PHUs has been steadily eroding over the years largely due to the Ministry putting caps (often 0%) on annual budget increases that are necessary to cover the costs of delivery of new programs, annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases and honouring collective agreements. This erosion will be significantly magnified by the Province's decision to shift 5% of the cost-shared and 30% of previously 100% provincially funded public health programs to municipalities. More details on this were [presented by aPHa](#) to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs on January 17, 2020 as part of its pre-budget consultation. Speaking notes and the transcript of this presentation are linked above and attached below.
- The autonomy of each local board of health (BOH) must be maintained and stronger mechanisms should be considered to reinforce their sole focus on and local decision-making authority over public health matters as well as to protect them from intrusive policies (e.g., municipal hiring freezes, vacancies on local boards and Associate Medical Officer of Health (AMOH) positions due to inappropriate delays in the provincial appointment and approval processes).
- Several organizational considerations are outlined in the attached aPHa Statement of Principles.

#### **Theme: Misalignment of Health, Social, and Other Services**

##### ***What has been successful in the current system to foster collaboration among public health, the health sector and social services?***

- aPHa respectfully observes that the use of the term "misalignment" in the wording of this theme is misleading, as it creates the false impression that misalignments are a significant systemic problem. On the contrary, PHUs are very well aligned with municipalities, social services, school boards and other community-based services and partners. Previous proposals to align PHU boundaries with those of the health sector (i.e., LHINs) has threatened these existing local relationships without demonstrating the necessity for doing so. If misalignments in certain areas are identified, they must be measured against and prioritized in context of existing alignments in others.
- The reciprocal mandate between the local MOH and LHIN CEO became an important enabler for public health's relationship with the health care sector and this is being expanded upon with most PHUs having direct involvement in the new Ontario Health Teams (OHTs).
- Our members provided us with many specific examples of successful local collaborations with the health care sector related to such topics as injury prevention, substance use, perinatal health, infectious disease prevention and health equity in program design. These will surely be presented in more detail in their individual submissions to the present survey.
- Our members provided us with many specific examples to demonstrate the strength of local collaboration with social services, boards of education and community agencies. The existing geographical alignments of these different groups was cited as critically important. Where public health is integrated within a municipal or regional government, links to their social services

departments are particularly strong. In other cases, formal service agreements and partnerships are highly dependent on shared community boundaries and characteristics.

- The OPHS are explicit in their requirement of all boards of health to carry out their mandated obligations in partnership with local stakeholders. Public health is in turn seen as a credible broker within the local community that can support multi-stakeholder engagement and community mobilization for healthy public policy.

***How could a modernized public health system become more connected to the health care system or social services?***

- Strengthen the health and social services sectors' focus on prevention and the social determinants of health. Explore the implementation of a "health in all policies" approach with parallel mandates, clear role expectations and accountability for protecting population health across related provincial government ministries and government-funded agencies.
- The Ministry of Health (Ministry) could provide a reciprocal and clearly defined mandate for PHUs and OHTs to utilize public health's surveillance and analysis expertise to conduct population-based needs assessments to inform the effective local allocation of primary health care resources and build capacity among health service providers to offer evidence-based health promotion and prevention interventions.
- Improvements to information technology to support interoperability and data standards to accelerate the appropriate inclusion of public health information into electronic health records and facilitate public health's receipt of vital information from primary care and the broader health care system. This collaboration would support disease prevention and health promotion at the individual to population-level to end hallway health care. More details on digital modernization will be provided in a separate submission by the COMOH Digital Health Committee.

***What are some examples of effective collaborations among public health, health services and social services?***

- Our members provided us with many specific examples of successful local collaborations among public health, health services and social services. These will surely be presented in more detail in their individual submissions to the present survey.
- The mandated reciprocal relationship between the local Medical Officer of Health (MOH) and Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) CEO was cited as instrumental in promoting a better understanding of public health's mandate, focus and functions to the health care conversation. Direct involvement of public health in local OHTs is expected to increase the momentum.
- The partnership between the Council of Ontario Directors of Education and COMOH (CODE-COMOH) is expected to contribute to the well-being of Ontario's children and students through enhancing PHU and school board partnerships in order to achieve optimal delivery of services and ongoing supports for children and students.

**Theme: Duplication of Effort**

As with the previous theme, aPHa would argue that the use of the term "Duplication of Effort" suggests that it is a systemic problem that underlies widespread inefficiencies. While we agree that

there are public health functions that could in fact be carried out jointly, regionally or centrally, the local nature of public health requires certain programs and services with similar aims to be developed and implemented in different ways to meet unique local needs.

Care must therefore be taken in defining the term and in identifying and eliminating duplication that is in fact redundant. Care must also be taken when examining alleged duplication of effort between sectors. Public health has a unique set of roles and responsibilities and it would be a mistake to assume that they are transferrable. For example, health promotion in public health differs fundamentally from health promotion in primary care. Only public health focuses on upstream population-level approaches to prevent injuries and illnesses before they occur, and success often depends on strong existing relationships with community partners.

***What functions of public health units should be local and why?***

- The health protection functions of public health are local by definition. Health hazard investigation and response, infection prevention and control, communicable disease outbreak management, water quality and food safety are examples of areas where local public health has clearly prescribed and detailed roles and responsibilities under the HPPA and OPHS. Carrying these out relies heavily on interaction with individuals, institutions, businesses and service providers throughout the local community. Timeliness and efficiency are supported by preexisting positive relationships.
- Health promotion work is also informed in large part by understanding the local population's characteristics, identifying local priorities and strategically developing approaches for policy development and program and service delivery that will be most responsive to local population health needs. Ongoing population health assessment and surveillance ensures that local data are at the root of program planning as well as healthy public policy development through public health's relationship with municipalities.
- Some public health services (e.g. harm reduction, screening programs, prenatal education, Healthy Babies Healthy Children, neighbourhood groups) focus on individuals and families with high needs. Public health's knowledge of the community and partnerships are a valuable resource for connecting clients with necessary services, which are also primarily local.

***What population health assessments, data and analytics are helpful to drive local improvements?***

- The epidemiological capacity to collect and access data to conduct detailed local population health assessments within local contexts must be enhanced. Public health programs and services benefit from solid data at the sub-health unit level (e.g., priority neighbourhoods, planning zones, ER admissions). Local epidemiologists have a keen understanding of the local context and are well positioned to collaborate with stakeholders to gather data, conduct analysis and inform recommendations for action and priority setting.
- The CMOH's 2017 Annual Report recommended a provincial population health survey to collect data at the local community and neighbourhood levels to contribute to a better understanding of community wellness. The survey would need to be flexible and nimble, with the ability to customize questions to local needs.
- The Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System is an ongoing local health telephone survey conducted collaboratively since 2001 by numerous PHUs and the Institute for Social Research at York

University. Information is gathered using questionnaires on a wide variety of health topics to inform service planning for the broad range of public health programs that are required by the OPHS, to advocate for healthy public policy development and to improve community awareness of health risks.

- Strategies to identify and address gaps in data and information must be considered. The [Children Count Locally Driven Collaborative Project](#) is an important current example of a strategy to improve available data and interventions to improve child and youth health in Ontario.

***What changes should the government consider to strengthen research capacity, knowledge exchange and shared priority setting for public health in the province?***

- alPHA believes that the most important development in this regard was the establishment of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, a.k.a. PHO. PHO has been instrumental in supporting our health protection activities with excellent standards of practice developed in communicable disease control, vaccination, and infection prevention and control. We believe that there is an important opportunity to reinforce PHO's capacity to strengthen similar work in the areas of environmental health and non-communicable diseases (which account for over 70% of ill health in Ontario) by focusing on evidence, translating it into recommended practice, and setting common implementation standards. PHO is the key agency for scientific expertise, research and knowledge exchange and is one of the Ontario public health sector's strongest assets. This is one of the strengths that needs to be built upon as the Ministry seeks to achieve the outcomes outlined in this discussion paper.

***What are public health functions, programs or services that could be strengthened if coordinated or provided at the provincial level? Or by Public Health Ontario?***

- As noted above, the existing roles and responsibilities of PHO should be reinforced and expanded.
- Increased centralized supports, provided by PHO or the Ministry, have the potential to reduce duplication of effort, and contribute to increased consistency and improved delivery of public health programs and services. Examples include a provincial immunization registry, provincial electronic medical records, centralized digital supports including facilitation of data sharing, provincial health communication campaigns, continuing professional education opportunities, centralized reviews of evidence, bulk purchasing, access to data repositories, provincial advisory committees etc. Centralized supports must be designed to sustain the local capacity to develop and implement innovative and locally relevant campaigns.
- Developing provincial leadership on surveillance and population health assessment, technical direction (especially on emerging public health issues), emergency management, healthy policy development and chronic disease prevention coordination. Setting provincial population health goals with targets and cross-sectoral strategies would be a useful foundation upon which to carry out these functions.
- The Ministry, likely via the independent authority of the CMOH, needs to be more active in providing local public health with guidance and / or direction when asked to ensure consistent approaches where there is agreement that they are required. There have been instances (ISPA enforcement, IPAC investigations and HIV Case management for recent examples) where local public health asked for direction to address disparate and sometimes conflicting local practices. With none provided, local MOHs were compelled to work together to develop their

own recommendations for a collective approach.

***Beyond what currently exists, are there other technology solutions that can help to improve public health programs and services and strengthen the public health system?***

- The COMO Digital Health Committee will be making a detailed submission to the Public Health Modernization consultation. It will call on the Province to develop a digital strategy for public health; provide sufficient resources to support aligned and necessary information systems and common applications; work with public health partners to facilitate the incorporation of public health information into a provincial electronic health record; centralized coordination and technical support for digital solution integration and Provincial leadership on data standards and interoperability.
- Other suggestions put forth by our members included bulk purchasing of information technology hardware and software, a centralized website with important public health information, a seamless provincial immunization registry, a centralized online inspection disclosure system, enhanced technology to reduce travel requirements (e.g., video calls for client interactions and videoconferencing for health unit staff in rural areas). Inequities in access to technology solutions and tech-mediated opportunities for collaboration were also raised. We expect that many other suggestions will be made in other submissions to the survey question.

**Theme: Inconsistent Priority Setting**

As with previous themes, aPHa would argue that the use of the term “Inconsistent Priority Setting” suggests a systemic problem that underlies widespread inefficiencies. The existence of different public health priorities in different parts of the province is a feature of the system, not a bug, and is one of its strengths. Local authority over priority setting must be preserved to ensure that the unique health needs of each community can be served. This should include the authority to adapt programs and services to address province-wide public health priorities according to the local context.

***What processes and structures are currently in place that promote shared priority setting across public PHUs?***

- PHUs are required, through the HPPA, to meet the requirements of the OPHS. These standards provide a framework to support consistent priority setting across Ontario and the related Accountability Agreements ensure provincial approval and awareness of each BOH’s plan for the delivery of mandated programs and services each year.
- Ontario’s 34 PHUs are connected to a wide range of networks that provide opportunities for sharing of information, priority setting and collective action. aPHa, including COMO, BOHs and Affiliate Sections, is the most important of these at the systemic level as it brings the governance, medical and programmatic aspects of the entire system together at a single table, which in turn provides an ideal point of contact for government and other stakeholders.
- Profession-specific associations such as ASPHIO, OPHNL, APHEO, AOPHBA, OAPHD, ODPH and HPO provide similar opportunities for the collective identification of priorities within their purview. Each of these groups is represented at the aPHa table.
- Topic-specific collaboratives, spanning regions or the province, provide opportunities to share information and resources, and to collectively address common goals. For example, regional

TCANs allow for shared priority setting and planning related to reducing smoking behavior in regions spanning multiple PHUs. Similar collaborative groups have addressed cannabis, alcohol and opioids.

- Regional PHU groupings (South West, Central West, Central East, North East, North West, East) are networks that provide similar opportunities for neighbouring PHUs that share geographic and demographic characteristics.
- 100% provincially funded public health programs (e.g. Universal Influenza Immunization Program, Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP)) are a clear demonstration of priorities that are shared province wide.

***What should the role of Public Health Ontario be in informing and coordinating provincial priorities?***

- PHO's mandate is to provide a foundation of sound information, knowledge and evidence to support policy, action and decisions of government, public health practitioners, front-line health workers and researchers. Centralized and timely evidence reviews, provision of provincial and local data, guidance documents and best practices, research ethics, and coordination of tables to address significant province-wide needs (e.g., Healthy Human Development table, Provincial Infectious Disease Advisory Committee) are key functions that underlie evidence-based setting of priorities throughout the public health sector. Reinforcing PHO's capacity to perform these functions in the areas of health promotion and non-communicable disease prevention should be considered.
- PHO's "hub and spoke" model, which was the basis for the former Regional Infection Control Networks, could be used to establish collaborative regional tables in the various public health areas of focus to inform common priorities and joint projects. Such an approach would be valuable in setting province-wide priorities as common themes emerge.
- PHO would be instrumental in providing the evidentiary basis for the establishment of provincial population health goals as proposed above.

***What models of leadership and governance can promote consistent priority setting?***

- A model of leadership and governance to promote consistent priority setting is already in place. The HPPA provides a clear, detailed and specific framework for the organization and delivery of public health programs and services, including the composition, authority and duties of boards of health. The HPPA is in turn the enabling legislation for the OPHS, which set out clear, detailed and specific requirements for the delivery of public health programs and services in each of the province's 34 PHUs.
- The Office of the CMOH is responsible for ensuring that the OPHS continue to be relevant and based on evidence, and for supporting local public PHUs in meeting the requirements of the standards. Each BOH is required to submit annual business plans to the Ministry through this office as part of the budget and accountability processes.
- Leadership and governance principles are outlined in the attached ALPHA Statement, including preserving the autonomy and authority of the local MOH and reinforcing local boards' autonomy, skill sets, effective governance and public health focus.

## Theme: Indigenous and First Nation Communities

### ***What has been successful in the current system to foster collaboration among public health and Indigenous communities and organizations?***

- PHUs with significant indigenous populations long ago identified the importance of improving their access to public health programs and services, especially in First Nations communities. Many have independently entered into formal agreements with local bands under Section 50 of the HPPA for the provision of programs and services.
- The 2018 OPHS added a requirement for boards of health to engage with First Nations and Indigenous communities and organizations under the Health Equity Standard. The [Relationship with Indigenous Communities Guideline, 2018](#) was developed to support this work and a [Relationship with Indigenous Communities Toolkit](#) is said to be under development by the Ministry.
- The widespread acceptance of and commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action throughout the public health sector. Staff training in cultural awareness / competency /safety, the local involvement of Indigenous leaders in decision making, program planning and relationship development, and local partnerships and initiatives have sprung forth from that commitment in all of Ontario's PHUs.

### ***Are there opportunities to strengthen Indigenous representation and decision-making within the public health sector?***

- In its Statement of Principles, aPHa notes the necessity of special consideration being given to the effects of any proposed organizational change on Ontario's many Indigenous communities, especially those with a close relationship with the boards of health for the PHUs within which they are located. It is further notes that opportunities to formalize and improve these relationships must be explored as part of the modernization process. aPHa recommends that this exploration, including consideration of the above question, be conducted in full consultation with Indigenous communities and organizations as well as boards of health that have already demonstrated commitment to and experience with Indigenous engagement and service delivery to these populations.
- In its Statement of Principles, aPHa recommends that local BOHs be reflective of the communities that they serve. In areas with large indigenous populations and / or First Nations communities, consideration should be given to appointing one or more members of those communities to the BOH itself. This has already been done, for example, in Peterborough. This could be reinforced with the formation of local Indigenous health advisory committees with more widespread stakeholder involvement. These committees would be especially important for identifying and addressing the health needs of Indigenous people living off-reserve in a culturally sensitive way.
- Provincially, the Office of the CMOH should ensure that central resource and policy supports are in place to facilitate local engagement with Indigenous communities and reinforce pathways to increasing representation and decision-making. The Health Equity requirements of the OPHS that are specific to improving the health of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people living in Ontario should be the foundation of these supports. The CMOH will also have an important role to play as a liaison with the Government of Canada (through the Public Health Agency of Canada) to ensure that it abides by its complementary obligation to contribute to the improvement of health care and health outcomes for these communities.

## **Theme: Francophone Communities**

### ***What has been successful in the current system in considering the needs of Francophone populations in planning, delivery and evaluation of public health programs and services?***

- alpha's members have extensive experience in providing programs and services aimed at different cultural and linguistic groups within their communities, including Ontario's significant Francophone population. PHUs with significant Francophone populations are best equipped to share what has been successful, identify the gaps and provide advice on how to address them. This is in fact a good example of the importance of ensuring that local boards of health retain decision-making authority over program planning and service delivery to best serve local needs.

### ***What improvements could be made to public health service delivery in French to Francophone communities?***

- The provision of a 100% provincially funded centralized translation service that is accessible to all boards of health was cited repeatedly in our members' feedback to this question, as was support for French-language training programs for health unit staff.

## **Theme: Learning from Past Reports**

### ***What improvements to the structure and organization of public health should be considered to address these challenges?***

- Most past reports have recommended PHU mergers, and alpha is not opposed to this in principle, as long as such mergers are of entities with complementary community characteristics and values, will lead to a demonstrable positive impact on capacity, are worth the extraordinary cost and disruption, and are favoured by all concerned parties. The Simcoe-Muskoka, North Bay-Parry Sound, Southwestern and Huron-Perth PHUs are the results of mergers that have taken place since 2005, and valuable insights on the process, including the identification of driving forces, key success factors and challenges, are readily available.
- As noted above, alpha does not believe that structural and organizational changes are necessary to address capacity challenges. While we agree that health unit mergers as a means to finding efficiencies and reducing duplication of efforts are worth considering, we have not been presented with a clear and convincing argument that a wholesale restructuring of the Ontario's public health system – with its concomitant major costs and disruptions - is a prerequisite for making it nimble, resilient, efficient and responsive.

### ***What about the current public health system should be retained as the sector is modernized?***

From alpha's Statement of Principles:

- Ontario's public health system must remain financially and administratively separate and distinct from the health care system.
- The strong, independent local authority for planning and delivery of public health programs and services must be preserved, including the authority to customize centralized public health programming or messaging according to local circumstances.

- Parts I-V and Parts VI.1 – IX of the HPPA should be retained as the statutory framework for the purpose of the Act, which is to “provide for the organization and delivery of public health programs and services, the prevention of the spread of disease and the promotion and protection of the health of the people of Ontario”.
- The OPHS should be retained as the foundational basis for local planning and budgeting for the delivery of public health programs and services.
- The leadership role of the local MOH as currently defined in the HPPA must be preserved with no degradation of independence, leadership or authority.

***What else should be considered as the public health sector is modernized?***

- Any and all changes must serve the goal of strengthening the Ontario public health system’s capacity to improve population health in all of Ontario’s communities through the effective and efficient local delivery of evidence-based public health programs and services.
- Achieving efficiencies must be defined in terms of improvements to service delivery and not cost savings. Each of the completed health unit mergers for example has had the former as their central aim but the merger process itself has always been costly.
- Provincial supports (financial, legal, administrative) must be provided to assist existing local PHUs in their transition to any new state without interruption to front-line services. Any costs associated with Public Health Modernization should be fully covered by the Ministry, including additional funding to address technology changes associated with any structure or governance changes.
- aPHa is very pleased with the format and process of the current consultation. That said, in the period between the initial 2019 budget announcement and the formal launch of this consultation (a period of over seven months), there was an unacceptable scarcity of information available to Ontario’s considerable public health workforce. This has had a measurable and possibly irreversible negative impact on culture and morale within Ontario’s public health workplaces. It has also put a considerable hindrance on the working relationship between local public health leadership and its partners within the Ministry. We hope that the transparency, comprehensiveness and reciprocity of this consultation will continue throughout the analysis and implementation phases to restore trust and demonstrate that the Government of Ontario values the public health professionals that are the foundational strength of the system.

## ABBREVIATIONS

aPHa	Association of Local Public Health Agencies
AOPHBA	Association of Ontario Public Health Business Administrators
APHEO	Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario
ASPPIO	Association of Supervisors of Public Health Inspectors of Ontario
BOH	Board of Health
CMOH	Chief Medical Officer of Health
COMOH	Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health
HPO	Health Promotion Ontario
HPPA	<i>Health Protection and Promotion Act</i>
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IPAC	Infection Prevention and Control
ISPA	<i>Immunization of School Pupils Act</i>
LDCP	Locally Driven Collaborative Project
OAPHD	Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry
OPHNL	Ontario Association of Public Health Nursing Leaders
ODPH	Ontario Dietitians in Public Health
OPHS	Ontario Public Health Standards
PHO	Public Health Ontario
PHU	Public Health Unit
TCAN	Tobacco Control Area Network

### Enclosures:

[aPHa Statement of Principles \(November 2019\)](#), also attached.

[aPHa Deputation, Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs \(January 17, 2020\)](#), also attached

## BACKGROUND

On April 11, 2019 the Minister of Finance announced the 2019 Ontario Budget, which included a pledge to modernize “the way public health units are organized, allowing for a focus on Ontario’s residents, broader municipal engagement, more efficient service delivery, better alignment with the health care system and more effective staff recruitment and retention to improve public health promotion and prevention”.

Plans announced for this initiative included regionalization and governance changes to achieve economies of scale, streamlined back-office functions and better-coordinated action by public health units, adjustments to the provincial-municipal cost-sharing of public health funding and an emphasis on digitizing and streamlining processes.

On November 6, 2019, further details were presented as part of the government’s Fall Economic Statement, which reiterates the Province’s consideration of “how to best deliver public health in a way that is coordinated, resilient, efficient and nimble and meets the evolving health needs and priorities of communities”. To this end, the government is renewing consultations with municipal governments and the public health sector under the leadership of Special Advisor Jim Pine, who is also the Chief Administrative Officer of the County of Hastings. The aim of the consultation is to ensure:

- Better consistency and equity of service delivery across the province;
- Improved clarity and alignment of roles and responsibilities between the Province, Public Health Ontario and local public health;
- Better and deeper relationships with primary care and the broader health care system to support the goal of ending hallway health care through improved health promotion and prevention;
- Unlocking and promoting leading innovative practices and key strengths from across the province; and
- Improved public health delivery and the sustainability of the system.

In preparation for these consultations and with the intent of actively supporting positive systemic change, the alPHa Board of Directors has agreed on the following principles as a foundation for its separate and formal submissions to the consultation process.

## PRINCIPLES

### *Foundational Principle*

- 1) Any and all changes must serve the goal of strengthening the Ontario public health system's capacity to improve population health in all of Ontario's communities through the effective and efficient local delivery of evidence-based public health programs and services.

### *Organizational Principles*

- 2) Ontario's public health system must remain financially and administratively separate and distinct from the health care system.
- 3) The strong, independent local authority for planning and delivery of public health programs and services must be preserved, including the authority to customize centralized public health programming or messaging according to local circumstances.
- 4) Parts I-V and Parts VI.1 – IX of the Health Protection and Promotion Act should be retained as the statutory framework for the purpose of the Act, which is to "provide for the organization and delivery of public health programs and services, the prevention of the spread of disease and the promotion and protection of the health of the people of Ontario".
- 5) The *Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability* should be retained as the foundational basis for local planning and budgeting for the delivery of public health programs and services.
- 6) Special consideration will need to be given to the effects of any proposed organizational change on Ontario's many Indigenous communities, especially those with a close relationship with the boards of health for the health units within which they are located. Opportunities to formalize and improve these relationships must be explored as part of the modernization process.

### *Capacity Principles*

- 7) Regardless of the sources of funding for public health in Ontario, mechanisms must be included to ensure that the total funding envelope is stable, predictable, protected and sufficient for the full delivery of all public health programs and services whether they are mandated by the province or developed to serve unique local needs as authorized by Section 9 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act.
- 8) Any amalgamation of existing public health units must be predicated on evidence-based conclusions that it will demonstrably improve the capacity to deliver public health programs and services to the residents of that area. Any changes to boundaries must respect and preserve existing municipal and community stakeholder relationships.
- 9) Provincial supports (financial, legal, administrative) must be provided to assist existing local public health agencies in their transition to any new state without interruption to front-line services.

### *Governance Principles*

- 10) The local public health governance body must be autonomous, have a specialized and devoted focus on public health, with sole oversight of dedicated and non-transferable public health resources.
- 11) The local public health governance body must reflect the communities that it serves through local representation, including municipal, citizen and / or provincial appointments from within the area. Appointments should be made with full consideration of skill sets, reflection of the area's socio-demographic characteristics and understanding of the purpose of public health.
- 12) The leadership role of the local Medical Officer of Health as currently defined in the Health Protection and Promotion act must be preserved with no degradation of independence, leadership or authority.

### **DESIRED OUTCOMES**

- Population health in Ontario will benefit from a highly skilled, trusted and properly resourced public health sector at both the provincial and local levels.
- Increased public and political recognition of the critical importance of investments in health protection and promotion and disease prevention to population health and the sustainability of the health care system.
- Local public health will have the capacity to efficiently and equitably deliver both universal public health programs and services and those targeted at at-risk / vulnerable / priority populations.
- The geographical and organizational characteristics of any new local public health agencies will ensure critical mass to efficiently and equitably deliver public health programs and services in all parts of the province.
- The geographical and organizational characteristics of any new local public health agencies will preserve and improve relationships with municipal governments, boards of education, social services organizations, First Nations communities, Ontario Health Teams and other local stakeholders.
- The geographical and organizational characteristics of any new local public health agencies will reflect the geographical, demographic and social makeup of the communities they serve in order to ensure that local public health needs are assessed and equitably and efficiently addressed.
- Local public health will benefit from strong provincial supports, including a robust Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario) and a robust and independent Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- The expertise and skills of Ontario's public health sector will be recognized and utilized by decision makers across sectors to ensure that health and health equity are assessed and addressed in all public policy.



Association of Local  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
Agencies

**Association of Local Public Health Agencies**  
**Speaking Points**  
**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs**  
**Re: 2020 Ontario Budget**  
**Friday, January 17, 2020**

- Good afternoon, Chair and Members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.
  
- I am Dr. Eileen de Villa, Vice-President of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, better known as alPHa, and Toronto's Medical Officer of Health and with me is Loretta Ryan, alPHa's Executive Director.
  
- alPHa represents all of Ontario's 34 boards of health and medical officers of health (MOHs).
  
- As you may know, in essence, the work of public health is organized in the [Ontario Public Health Standards](#) as follows:
  - Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being
  - Emergency Management
  - Food Safety
  - Health Equity
  - Healthy Environments
  - Healthy Growth and Development
  - Immunization
  - Infectious and Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control
  - Population Health Assessment

- Safe Water
  - School Health
  - Substance Use and Injury Prevention
- Last January, in the [alPHa Pre-Budget Submission](#), alPHa noted that:
    - Public Health is on the Front Line of Keeping People Well
    - Public Health Delivers an Excellent Return on Investment
    - Public Health is an Ounce of Prevention that is Worth a Pound of Cure
    - Public Health Contributes to Strong and Healthy Communities
    - Public Health is Money Well Spent
  - Furthermore, alPHa recommended that:
    - The integrity of Ontario’s public health system be maintained
    - The Province continue its funding commitment to cost-shared programs
    - The Province make other strategic investments, including in the public health system, that address the government’s priorities of improving services and ending hallway medicine
  - As regards to this last point, Public Health’s contribution to ending hallway medicine is summarized in alPHa’s [Public Health Resource Paper](#) .
  - Despite this advice, the 2019 Ontario Budget announced that the Government would be changing the way the public health system was organized and funded.
  - On October 10, 2019, Ontario named [Jim Pine](#) as its Advisor on Public Health (and Emergency Health Services) consultations.
  - Subsequently, on November 18, the Ministry of Health launched renewed [Public Health consultations](#) and released a [Discussion Paper](#).

- alPHa was pleased with these recent announcements and has been fully engaged with the consultation.
- For example, on November 15, alPHa released a [Statement of Principles](#) respecting Public Health Modernization.
- On a funding note, as was reported by alPHa on [September 11](#), the Ministry of Health confirmed the cost-sharing formula for public health will change to 70% provincial/30% municipal to be applied to almost all mandatory public health programs and services.
- That said, as the Premier announced on [August 19](#) at the AMO Conference, and which alPHa welcomed, municipalities would be receiving one-time transitional funding to limit the increase in costs borne by municipalities in 2020 to no more than 10%.
- Despite this, many boards of health have reported that they have had to draw on their reserves to ease the financial burden that this decision has placed on their obligated municipalities .
- A more positive announcement in the 2019 Ontario budget was the decision to proceed with a new 100% provincially funded, public health unit delivered Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP), which was officially [launched](#) on November 20.
- alPHa believes that a modernized, effective and efficient public health system that is adequately resourced is needed more than ever.
- alPHa agrees, for example, with the Standing Committee on Public Accounts [Report](#) about the importance of addressing key chronic disease risk factors such as physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, alcohol consumption and

tobacco use of which the attributable burden of illness places huge demands on the health care system.

- Moreover, in its [presentation](#) to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, alPHa warned about the unforeseen consequences of the legalization of cannabis and the promotion of vapour products, such as e-cigarettes and other similar products.
- Finally, as the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health has recently noted, the Public Health Agency of Canada is tracking a novel coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China; as our experience with SARS demonstrated, infectious diseases “know no borders”.
- With all the foregoing in mind, alPHa respectfully recommends the following:
  - Led by Ontario’s Advisor, the Ministry of Health continue to pursue meaningful consultations with key stakeholders, including alPHa, respecting Public Health Modernization
  - Any changes to the public health system be implemented in accordance with alPHa’s [Statement of Principles](#) and pending response to the Public Health Modernization discussion paper
  - The public health system receives sufficient and sustainable funding to address population health needs
  - Ontario preferably restore the previous provincial-municipal cost-sharing (75/25) formula for Public Health and, at the very least, make no further changes to the current (70/30) formula
  - Ontario continue to invest in Public Health operations and capital, including 100% funding for priority programs, such as OSDCP
- Thank you for your attention. We would be pleased to answer any questions.

[Full Transcript \(all presentations\)](#)

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## Association of Local Public Health Agencies

**The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu):** Next, I would like to call upon the Association of Local Public Health Agencies. Please state your name for the record. You have seven minutes for your presentation.

**Dr. Eileen de Villa:** Thank you very much. Good afternoon, Chair and members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. I'm Dr. Eileen de Villa, vice-president of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, better known as ALPHA, and I'm also Toronto's medical officer of health. I'm joined today by my colleague Loretta Ryan, ALPHA's executive director.

ALPHA represents all of Ontario's 34 boards of health and medical officers of health. As you may know, in essence, the work of public health is organized in the Ontario Public Health Standards as follows: chronic disease prevention and well-being, emergency management, food safety, health equity, healthy environments, healthy growth and development, immunization, infectious and communicable diseases prevention and control, population health assessment, safe water, school health, substance use, and injury prevention.

Last January, in the ALPHA pre-budget submission, ALPHA noted that public health is on the front line of keeping people well. Public health delivers an excellent return on investment. Public health is an ounce of prevention that is worth a pound of cure. Public

health contributes to strong and healthy communities, and public health is money well spent.

Furthermore, ALPHA recommended that the integrity of Ontario's public health system be maintained, that the province continue its funding commitment to cost-shared programs and that the province make other strategic investments, including in the public health system, that address the government's priorities of improving services and ending hallway health care. In regard to this last point, public health's contribution to ending hallway health care is summarized in ALPHA's public health resource paper.

Despite this advice, the 2019 Ontario budget announced that the government would be changing the way the public health system was organized and funded.

On October 10, 2019, Ontario named Jim Pine as its adviser on public health and on emergency health services for the consultations. Subsequently, on November 18, the Ministry of Health launched renewed public health consultations and released a discussion paper. ALPHA was pleased with these recent announcements and has been fully engaged with the consultation. For example, on November 15, ALPHA released a statement of principles respecting public health modernization.

On a funding note, on September 11, the Ministry of Health confirmed that the cost-sharing formula for public health will change to 70% provincial and 30% municipal, to be applied to almost all mandatory public health programs and services. This said, as the Premier announced on August 19 at the AMO conference—and which ALPHA welcomed—municipalities would be receiving one-time transitional funding to limit the increase in costs borne by municipalities in 2020 to no more than 10%. Despite this, many boards of health have reported that they have had to draw on their reserves to ease the financial burden that this decision has placed on their obligated municipalities.

A more positive announcement in the 2019 Ontario budget was the decision to proceed with a new, 100% provincially funded, public-health-unit-delivered Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program, or OSDCP, which was officially launched on November 20.

ALPHA believes that a modernized, effective and efficient public health system that is adequately resourced is needed more than ever. ALPHA agrees, for example, with the Standing Committee on Public Accounts report about the importance of addressing key chronic disease risk factors, such as physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, alcohol consumption and tobacco use, of which the attributable burden of illness places huge demands on the health care system. Moreover, in its presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, ALPHA warned about the unforeseen consequences of the legalization of cannabis and the promotion of vapour products, such as e-cigarettes and other similar products.

Finally, as the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health has recently noted, the Public Health Agency of Canada is tracking a novel coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China. As our experience with SARS demonstrated, infectious diseases know no borders.

With all the foregoing in mind, ALPHA respectfully recommends the following:

—led by Ontario’s adviser, the Ministry of Health continue to pursue meaningful consultations with key stakeholders, including ALPHA, respecting public health modernization;

—any changes to the public health system be implemented in accordance with ALPHA’s statement of principles and pending response to the public health modernization discussion paper;

—that the public health system receive sufficient and sustainable funding to address population health needs—

**The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu):** One minute.

**Dr. Eileen de Villa:**—that Ontario preferably restore the previous provincial-municipal cost sharing 75-25 formula for public health and, at the very least, make no further changes to the current 70-30 formula; and

—that Ontario continue to invest in public health operations and capital, including 100% funding for priority programs such as the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program.

I'll thank you for your attention, and we would be very pleased to address any questions you might have.

**The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu):** Thank you. We'll go to the opposition side this time. MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you very much for your presentation. I commend you for your work. I would say that people didn't understand what public health did previous to these abrupt changes; we understand it now.

I would also like to say, we remember when SARS happened, and Dr. Sheela Basrur—the heroic efforts that we took to prevent that from being a full-blown crisis. It was 15 or 16 years ago; how quickly we forget, right? So I think we need to keep reminding ourselves that when we need public health to be able to mobilize, we really, really need it.

So I want to commend you. I understand the work that you do. I always did. I want to say that we're fully supportive of what you do. There's no misunderstanding on the part of the New Democrats of what you do.

My question is very specific because we've got a short time. About the changes to the public health unit, the geographic deployment—so 35 units that are going to now, perhaps, be shrunk down to 10. This is a question about my riding in Hamilton, where our medical officer of health, Dr. Richardson, has expressed some of her concerns, particularly now that we are an Ontario health team and we do not know how the Ontario health team is trying to get on with their work without any direction—really clear direction, I would say—from the government and without the understanding that this public health unit will now maybe be beyond the geographic area of the Ontario health team.

So there's a lot of confusion out there in terms of what's happening. I'm wondering if you have any understanding of that or any advice around what the impact will be when these health units shrink.

1620

**Dr. Eileen de Villa:** Thank you for the question. At this stage of the game and as alluded to in my remarks, there are ongoing consultations right now in respect of public health modernization as proposed by the current provincial government. My understanding at this stage is that there is still open discussion with respect to what will be the configuration of local public health units. You're right: Right now, there are currently 34. There were some original proposals made last year. We're understanding at this stage of the game that there is some revisiting, a "reset," I believe, is the word that has been used. So we don't know yet where the discussions will land.

However, I would say that there are some important questions to ask here and some important considerations for the committee. First public health as a system is separate from the health care system. There are important areas of interaction that we need to have between public health and health care, but they are in fact distinct and separate. The Ontario health teams fall more within the context of health care, and that's a very important role that needs to be played. I think there are certainly some questions as to how that will manifest itself in the future. However, it is in fact separate from public health.

**The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu):** One minute.

**Dr. Eileen de Villa:** That's not to take away from its importance.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu):** MPP Arthur.

**Mr. Ian Arthur:** Thank you so much for your presentation. I echo the sentiments of my colleague.

Just very quickly: The upstream causes of health care costs were talked about for a long time. It seems to have receded a bit in terms of the discussion. With skyrocketing health care costs, do you see any avenue other than dealing with those upstream causes for bringing those expenditures under control?

**Dr. Eileen de Villa:** Thank you for the question. As a public health practitioner, we are all about the upstream. That is our focus. That is where we live, and that's where we provide the most value to the system. There will always be some need for health care, which is downstream. However, we know that what constitutes and what maintains

health are the social determinants of health, the conditions within which people live and the environments within which they live—

**The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu):** Thank you. I apologize to cut you off. We'll have to move to the government side now. MPP Skelly.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Thank you for your presentation. This year our government committed over \$700 million—close to \$800 million—in funding for public health units right across Ontario. Yes, we believe that there is an opportunity and several challenges moving forward in the restructuring and modernization of delivery of those services, and we are consulting, I believe under the leadership and direction of Jim Pine. He is the emergency health services adviser. He is leading the dialogue, meeting with representatives from municipalities, meeting with health service sector representatives from right across the province, in order to understand what the challenges are, in order to identify perhaps some of the duplication of services. We have seen examples that have been brought forward to our government.

I'm just wondering if maybe you could, while we have this opportunity at this committee hearing, share with this committee some of the areas that you have identified as duplication in the delivery of health care services under these current boards.

**Dr. Eileen de Villa:** Thank you for the question. I'm going to talk about duplication in respect of public health as opposed to health care.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** I should say "public health." Thank you.

**Dr. Eileen de Villa:** Yes, because they are quite distinct, as I indicated earlier. You're quite right around the consultations; I think that there is an opportunity to engage in conversation around what's best for public health. The public health system, however, does require the co-operation and collaboration of several partners. There's certainly a

role for provincial entities. There's a role for local entities, some of which are governmental and some of which are community-based.

Where are there areas that we could improve? There are always areas for improvement, whether we're talking about public health or health care. When it comes to public health, I think what we have seen through the various reports—some of which emanated from local public health; some of which have come through Auditor General-type reports—would include areas like research.

I think there is an opportunity, as well, to confer across the province around what are some of the directions and priorities that we should be seeking together, because we know that where we have had success in public health in the past, most of the successes have come through the collaborative efforts of a variety of local or regional public health entities, as well as the province.

I think those are just a few examples of some areas where we could collaborate better and perhaps reduce duplication.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** One of the programs that you raised involves dental care for seniors, which is, of course, something I think most of us really believe is long overdue.

**The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu):** One minute.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Can you speak to some of the limitations, some of your observations, since we've started introducing that program?

**Dr. Eileen de Villa:** It's a relatively new program, launched in November and currently being delivered through public health units. I would say that for many of my colleagues around the province, one of the challenges is that they did not have pre-existing seniors'

dental care programs, or facilities through which to deliver such clinical services. Certainly, establishing those facilities is one of the challenges that exist right now.

But as mentioned in our remarks, we at ALPHA are extremely pleased. This was certainly one of the positives in respect of recent funding announcements when it came to public health and public health delivery programs.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu):** Thank you so much for your presentation.



# Renfrew County and District Health Unit

*"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"*

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July 16, 2020

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health  
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3  
email: [christine.elliottco@ola.org](mailto:christine.elliottco@ola.org)

Dear Minister Elliott,

**Re: Endorsement of correspondence regarding the 2020 Municipal Cost Share of Public Health Funding from Eastern Ontario Health Unit and correspondence regarding COVID-19 and Reconsiderations Related to Public Health Modernization from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies**

At the Regular Board meeting held on June 30, 2020, the Board of Health for Renfrew County and District Health Unit agreed to support the following motion by the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPR District Health Unit):

"THAT the correspondence sent by the Eastern Ontario Health Unit to the Minister of Health regarding the 2020 Municipal Cost Share of Public Health Funding (attached), and the correspondence sent by the Association of Local Public Health Agencies to the Minister of Health requesting consideration of a pause on the Public Health Modernization initiative (attached) be endorsed; and THAT the provincial share of public health funding be reinstated to its previous level; and THAT a letter of support be sent to The Honourable Christine Elliott".

The Board of Health for Renfrew County and District Health Unit agrees with the Eastern Ontario Health Unit and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies that the Public

Health Modernization process should be deferred until after the COVID-19 response is examined and that public health funding should be restored to its previous level for 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janice Visneskie Moore".

Janice Visneskie Moore  
Chair, Board of Health

cc: Dr. David Williams, Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Alison Blair, Executive Lead for Public Health Modernization  
Jim Pine, Special Advisor, Public Health Modernization  
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA)

June 19, 2020

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 777 Bay St.  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3  
(Sent via email to: [christine.elliottco@ola.org](mailto:christine.elliottco@ola.org))

Dear Minister Elliott

**RE: Endorsement of correspondence regarding the 2020 Municipal Cost Share of Public Health Funding from Eastern Ontario Health Unit and correspondence regarding COVID-19 and Reconsiderations Related to Public Health Modernization from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies**

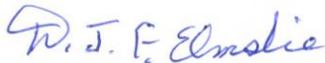
At its meeting held on June 18, 2020, the Board of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPR District Health Unit) passed the following motion:

“THAT the correspondence sent by the Eastern Ontario Health Unit to the Minister of Health regarding the 2020 Municipal Cost Share of Public Health Funding (attached), and the correspondence sent by the Association of Local Public Health Agencies to the Minister of Health requesting consideration of a pause on the Public Health Modernization initiative (attached) be endorsed; and THAT the provincial share of public health funding be reinstated to its previous level; and THAT a letter of support be sent to The Honourable Christine Elliott”.

The Board Health agrees with the Eastern Ontario Health Unit and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies that the Public Health Modernization process should be deferred until after the COVID-19 response is examined and that public health funding should be restored to its previous level for 2020.

Sincerely

BOARD OF HEALTH FOR THE HALIBURTON,  
KAWARTHA, PINE RIDGE DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT



Doug Elmslie  
Chair, Board of Health  
DE/aln/ed

Cc (via email): Dr. David Williams, Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Alison Blair, Executive Lead for Public Health Modernization  
Jim Pine, Special Advisor, Public Health Modernization  
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)  
Jennifer Moore, CAO, Northumberland County  
Mike Rutter, Chief Administrative Officer, County of Haliburton  
Ron Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Kawartha Lakes  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA)

Attachments: 2

PROTECTION · PROMOTION · PREVENTION

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191 Highland Street, Unit 301  
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Phone · 1-866-888-4577  
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**LINDSAY OFFICE**  
108 Angeline Street South  
Lindsay, Ontario K9V 3L5  
Phone · 1-866-888-4577  
Fax · 705-324-0455

Cornwall, February 12, 2020

The Honorable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health and Deputy Premier  
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor, 80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto ON M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Elliott:

**RE: 2020 Municipal Cost Share of Public Health Funding**

At its meeting on January 30, 2020, the Eastern Ontario Health Unit (EOHU) Board of Health unanimously passed the following motion number 2020-1393:

**WHEREAS** the Ontario Government's Public Health Modernization Consultation process is still ongoing and in fact delayed;

**WHEREAS** the Public Health Modernization Consultation process does not address public health funding models including municipal cost-share;

**WHEREAS** without prior consultation nor discussion with health units or municipalities and before a new public health structure model has been devised and implemented, the municipal public health funding share for 2020 has been increased to 30% and now extends to include programs not previously cost-shared with municipalities;

**WHEREAS** the 30% share across all programs, including those previously not cost-shared will result in significant and likely unsustainable increase of close to 50% to the EOHU's 3 obligated, mostly rural municipalities which have a limited tax base;

**WHEREAS** the EOHU's obligated municipalities have planned for a 2020 modest overall contribution increase of up to 2% which is less than their new 30% cost-share formula 2020 contribution, even offset by verbally confirmed one-time transitional funding by the Ministry of Health;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** for the calendar year of 2020 the provincial Ministry of Health reverse the 30% cost-share formula and return to previous years' municipal share of 25% applicable only to previously shared mandatory programs;

and

**FURTHERMORE THAT** copies of this motion be forwarded to local municipalities, the Wardens Caucus of Eastern Ontario, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), ROMA, local MPPs, MPP Steven Clark, all Ontario Boards of Health, the Association of Public Health Agencies (alPHa) in request for their support to urge the provincial Ministry of Health not to change the 2019 cost-share formula.

.../2



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[www.EOHU.ca](http://www.EOHU.ca) • 1 800 267-7120 • [www.BSEO.ca](http://www.BSEO.ca)

If you require this information in an alternate format, please call 1 800 267-7120 and press 0.  
Si les renseignements sont requis dans un autre format, veuillez appeler au 1 800 267-7120 et faire le 0.

Thank you for your attention to this important public health issue.

Sincerely,



Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, MD, CM, MPH, FRCPC(C)  
Medical Officer of Health/CEO  
Secretary, Board of Health

Copy: Municipalities of Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Prescott & Russell  
Warden's Caucus of Eastern Ontario  
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)  
ROMA  
City of Cornwall  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Association of Public Health Agencies (aPHa)  
Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Jim McDonnell, MPP, Stormont - Dundas - South Glengarry  
Amanda Simard, MPP, Glengarry - Prescott-Russell  
Steven Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs

alPHa's members are  
the public health units  
in Ontario.

**alPHa Sections:**

Boards of Health  
Section

Council of Ontario  
Medical Officers of  
Health (COMOH)

**Affiliate**

**Organizations:**

Association of Ontario  
Public Health Business  
Administrators

Association of  
Public Health  
Epidemiologists  
In Ontario

Association of  
Supervisors of Public  
Health Inspectors of  
Ontario

Health Promotion  
Ontario

Ontario Association of  
Public Health Dentistry

Ontario Association of  
Public Health Nursing  
Leaders

Ontario Dietitians In  
Public Health

March 6, 2020

Hon. Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health  
5th Floor  
777 Bay St.  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Elliott,

**Re: COVID-19 and Reconsiderations Related to Public Health Modernization**

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On behalf of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) and its member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations, I am writing today to urge you to consider pausing the Public Health Modernization initiative until the COVID-19 emergency is declared over in order to ensure that the response can be analysed, evaluated and incorporated into the consultations.

After a long period of uncertainty within the public health sector, we were indeed very grateful for your January 31 news release that included your praise of public health's "remarkable responsiveness" to the 2019 novel coronavirus and your expression of confidence that dedicated public health professionals are keeping Ontarians safe.

As we noted in our submission to the Public Health Modernization consultation paper, commitments to strengthening Ontario's public health system in response to the Walkerton, SARS and H1N1 health emergencies (including increased provincial responsibility for funding, strengthened role of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and creation of The Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion) have led to measurable improvements to the Ontario public health sector's capacity to detect and respond to emerging threats. The swift collective and thorough response to the COVID-19 epidemic is a clear application by Ontario's public health sector of the lessons learned from the 2003 SARS outbreak.

This is not to say that activating our emergency response mechanisms has become a simple matter. Emergency response is by its very nature incredibly resource intensive and requires a high degree of ingenuity and nimbleness to adapt the response to a constantly evolving situation. Unfortunately, this can have a measurable impact on the equally important health protection and promotion activities that Ontario's dedicated public health professionals carry out every day to keep Ontarians well.

As we also noted in our submission to the Public Health Modernization team, the capacity for most public health units has been steadily eroding over the years largely due to the Ministry putting caps (often 0%) on annual budget increases that are necessary to cover the costs of delivery of new programs, annual CPI increases and honouring collective agreements. This erosion will be significantly and immediately compounded by the Province's abrupt and unjustified decision to immediately shift 5% of the cost-shared and 30% of previously 100% provincially funded public health programs to municipalities.

It is often said that public health is at its best when it's invisible to the public. In other words, its most important and effective contributions to population health are in fact those day-to-day health promotion, disease prevention and surveillance activities that we know will protect people from ever-present threats to their health and well being. In the Ontario Public Health Standards, this province has one of the world's strongest foundations for these contributions. The chronic inadequacy of resources to meet our daily obligations is regrettably brought into stark relief when they need to be diverted to emergency response duties.

As the response to COVID-19 has progressed, the PH-EMS Modernization team has recognized the need for local public health to focus on its work without distraction and postponed further face to face consultations with local public health in addition to extending the deadline for written submissions. We are respectfully asking that you reinforce this by providing official direction to pause the modernization process at least until the COVID-19 emergency is declared over, a full analysis of the response has been conducted and the lessons learned have been applied.

In addition, we are asking you to immediately reverse the download of the provincial portion of the public health funding envelope to restore the degree of financial certainty required to ensure that the both the extraordinary response and routine public health activities remain robust.

We see this test of public health as an important opportunity to take a collective step back and reconsider the approach that is being taken towards Ontario's public health sector, as a keener understanding of its purpose is re-entering the public and political discourse. We are eager to assist you in achieving your vision of a "coordinated public health sector that is nimble, resilient, efficient and responsive to the province's evolving health priorities" and we look forward to continuing the vital Public Health Modernization discussions that have already begun.

In the meantime, we are once again asking that the public health aspect of the PH-EMS Modernization endeavour be deferred until such a time as the COVID-19 response can be examined in retrospect and inform those discussions, and that the provincial share of public health funding be restored to its previous level at least until the discussions have concluded.

We would be pleased to discuss this with you further. To schedule a meeting, please have your staff contact Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, alPHa, at [loretta@alphaweb.org](mailto:loretta@alphaweb.org) or 416-595-0006 x 222.

Yours sincerely,



Carmen McGregor,  
alPHa President

**COPY:** Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Alison Blair, Executive Lead for Public Health Modernization  
Jim Pine, Special Adviser, Public Health Modernization

August 19, 2020

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Deputy Premier  
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Hepburn Block  
80 Grosvenor Street, 10th Floor  
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Elliott:

On behalf of the Board of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit I commend the provincial government for its leadership in bringing COVID-19 under control throughout Ontario. Through the definitive leadership of the provincial government, and with the concerted action of local public health units, Ontario has achieved a cumulative incidence of disease that is less than half of our neighbouring states, and a daily incidence at present that is less than 10% of theirs. The rapid action of the province putting in place public health measures in March, and their careful withdrawal since that time have been essential to our success. Also essential has been the redirection of almost all the resources within local health units to enable the timely identification of cases and their contacts for home isolation, management of outbreaks in workplaces, Long Term-Care facilities and retirement homes, and the provision of guidance and direction to municipalities, businesses, organizations and the general public supporting physical distancing, hand hygiene, and face coverings. All of these actions have enabled our communities to flatten the curve without which we would have had the same experience as our neighbouring jurisdictions to the south.

Local public health units, with the leadership of their boards of health, are completely dedicated to the successful control of COVID-19 moving forward until our provision of mass vaccination and with it the hoped-for end to the pandemic. If necessary, we will continue this struggle for years.

In order to continue to be successful, additional resources are needed, and the promise of additional resources by the province has been very much appreciated. This includes the \$100 million to public health communicated earlier in the year (the *COVID-19 Extraordinary Expenses*), and recently the \$50 million (500 nurses) for the public health support to the recommencement of the schools (the *School-Focused Nurses*).

This additional funding will be essential to enable the success of the local public health response to the pandemic; however, its timely provision is also critical to our success. Through communication with Ministry of Health staff we have learned that the *COVID-19 Extraordinary Expenses* will be provided late in 2020 as reimbursement for extraordinary expenditures related to the pandemic response. This approach requires boards of health to take on these expenditures throughout the year without certainty as to the actual amount that they will be reimbursed. Some boards do not have reserve funds, and others have depleted their reserves

□ **Barrie:**  
15 Sperling Drive  
Barrie, ON  
L4M 6K9  
705-721-7520  
FAX: 705-721-1495

□ **Collingwood:**  
280 Pretty River Pkwy.  
Collingwood, ON  
L9Y 4J5  
705-445-0804  
FAX: 705-445-6498

□ **Cookstown:**  
2-25 King Street S.  
Cookstown, ON  
L0L 1L0  
705-458-1103  
FAX: 705-458-0105

□ **Gravenhurst:**  
2-5 Pineridge Gate  
Gravenhurst, ON  
P1P 1Z3  
705-684-9090  
FAX: 705-684-9887

□ **Huntsville:**  
34 Chaffey St.  
Huntsville, ON  
P1H 1K1  
705-789-8813  
FAX: 705-789-7245

□ **Midland:**  
A-925 Hugel Ave.  
Midland, ON  
L4R 1X8  
705-526-9324  
FAX: 705-526-1513

□ **Orillia:**  
120-169 Front St. S.  
Orillia, ON  
L3V 4S8  
705-325-9565  
FAX: 705-325-2091

already in their response (including our Board of Health). Without the provision of the funds at this time, these boards will not be able to maintain the level of their response needed to fully control COVID-19. In addition, the boards have been instructed to proceed with hiring the additional *School-Focused Nurses* without having the additional funding at this time required to do so; those boards that do not have remaining reserve funds will not be in a position to do so until they receive these additional funds.

Local public health has performed extraordinary work with the province to flatten the curve, and to enable the opening of the economy and soon the school system. This is a critical time for us all as we strive to maintain these achievements while avoiding a resurgence of cases that would threaten these gains. Therefore, the Board of Health urges the immediate provision of the funding allocations to local boards of health regarding the *COVID-19 Extraordinary Expenses* and for the *School-Focused Nurses* in order to enable a response by local public health units that is unobstructed by local financial shortfalls.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your exemplary leadership.

Sincerely,

**ORIGINAL Signed By:**

Anita Dubeau, Chair  
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Board of Health

AD:CG:cm

cc. Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Mayor and Council of Simcoe and Muskoka  
Members of Provincial Parliament for Simcoe and Muskoka

July 30, 2020

The Honourable Patty Hajdu. P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
Sent via email: [Patty.Hajdu@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Patty.Hajdu@parl.gc.ca)

The Honourable David Lametti  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada  
Department of Justice Canada  
284 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H8  
Sent via email: [David.Lametti@parl.gc.ca](mailto:David.Lametti@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Hajdu and Minister Lametti:

**RE: The Decriminalization of Personal Possession of Illicit Drugs**

This builds on the Board's September 2018 endorsement of a similar motion from Toronto Public Health. In making this endorsement, the Board joins a growing movement to pursue a public health approach to drug policy.

Opioid use and its related harms is a growing problem here in Chatham-Kent. From 2003 to 2017 the rate of emergency room visits for opioid poisoning among Chatham-Kent residents increased 225% and the rate of hospitalizations increased by 45%. Since the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been an increasing number of calls to local EMS and emergency department visits related to opioid overdoses.

Evidence from other countries that have pursued decriminalization, demonstrate, that in order for it to be effective, this approach must be accompanied by investments in harm reduction, treatment, and mental health supports and services. <sup>1</sup>

The Board strongly supports the decriminalization of personal possession of illicit drugs together with comminuted commitment of resources to effectively address problematic substance use and reduce related harms in our community and calls on the federal government to create a national task force to research drug policy reform.

Sincerely,



Joe Faas  
Chair, Chatham-Kent Board of Health

C: Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police  
Honourable Dave Epp, MP, Chatham-Kent-Leamington  
Honourable Rick Nicholls, MPP, Chatham-Kent-Leamington  
Honourable Monte McNaughton, MPP, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex  
Chatham-Kent Municipal Council

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<sup>1</sup> Hughes, C. and Stevens, A. (2011). Harm Reduction Digest (44) A resounding success or a disastrous failure: Re-examining the interpretation of evidence on the Portuguese decriminalization of illicit drugs. Drug And Alcohol

July 27, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., MP  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2  
Sent via email: [justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca)

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Privy Council Office  
Room 1000  
80 Sparks Street Ottawa, ON K1A 0A3  
Sent via email: [chrystia.freeland@parl.gc.ca](mailto:chrystia.freeland@parl.gc.ca)

The Honourable Bill Morneau, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Finance  
90 Elgin Street, 17th Floor  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G5  
Sent via email: [bill.morneau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:bill.morneau@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau, Deputy Prime Minister Freeland, and Minister Morneau:

**RE: Basic Income for Income Security during COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond**

At its meeting held on June 17, 2020, the Chatham-Kent Board of Health received correspondence to the federal government from Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, dated May 20, 2020, Timiskaming Health Unit, dated June 9, 2020, Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, dated June 19, 2020. These letters request that the federal government transition the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) into a basic income for all Canadians during the COVID-19 response and beyond. The Board also endorses the May 11, 2020 resolution by the City of Kitchener to establish a universal basic income.

Income is one of the strongest predictors of health, and it makes sense that focusing on population health interventions to address socioeconomic factors will impact health outcomes far greater than individual focused interventions.

.../2

Previous to COVID-19, Chatham-Kent residents have experienced lower median household incomes, higher rates of poverty (with more than one in four children living in low income), lower rates of post-secondary education, higher proportions of the population working in lower wage manufacturing, retail, and service occupations, as well as higher rates of lone-parent families, seniors, and people living alone. Socio-economic factors vary across the Municipality with some communities and neighbourhoods facing a higher degree of material deprivation than others. An examination of local chronic disease health inequities has shown significantly higher rates of chronic disease-related health care utilization and death in the most materially deprived areas compared to the least deprived areas of Chatham-Kent. Annual analysis of the local cost of a nutritious food basket has continued to illustrate how little money a family of four on a social assistance budget would have left to cover the costs of childcare, rural transportation, and other basic needs, after paying for shelter and healthy food. Furthermore, the most recent calculation of Chatham-Kent's living wage well exceeded \$16 per hour, and local costs of living have increased since that time.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we can anticipate the exacerbation of existing disparities, creating an even wider gap between those with opportunity and those without. Local concerns around homelessness, poverty, food insecurity, transportation, mental health and addictions, child and partner violence, and the needs of Indigenous people have been amplified.

The Board strongly recommends your government take immediate action to evolve CERB into legislation for a basic income as an effective long-term response to the issues of income security, poverty, food insecurity, and overall community health and well-being.

Sincerely,



Joe Faas  
Chair, Chatham-Kent Board of Health

C: Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Pegeen Walsh, Executive Director, Ontario Public Health Association  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Honourable Dave Epp, MP, Chatham-Kent-Leamington  
Honourable Rick Nicholls, MPP, Chatham-Kent-Leamington  
Honourable Monte McNaughton, MPP, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex  
Chatham-Kent Municipal Council

**Elizabeth Milne**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 17, 2020 7:59 AM  
**To:** Elizabeth Milne  
**Subject:** Make Masks Mandatory

Attention Ms.Milne,

Please circulate this email to all MLHU Board Of Health Members.  
Thank you.

[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Cassidy and MLHU Board of Health,

I am writing to express my concern around the July 2 COVID Order from the MLHU and why the Mayor, City Council, the Warden, Middlesex County Council and the MLHU Board of Health are siding with Dr. Mackie in NOT making a mandatory mask policy in all indoor public places, as many other municipalities across Ontario have ordered.

Dr. Mackie's and Mr. Holder's recommendation that we wear masks in public indoor places is not working. For example, the staff at Food Basics, Commissioners Rd. West where I often shop, do not wear masks. While there this week, a shopper standing beside me sneezed. I suggested to her that she should wear a mask. She answered, "I only sneezed once." With airborne COVID-19 spread now seen as very possible, I became anxious. When shopping at Tuckey's Home Hardware my husband never sees their staff wearing masks. He notes many younger shoppers don't wear masks either. While shopping at Metro in Byron a week ago I had to jump back against the canned goods shelf behind me to get farther away from an unmasked young mom with her baby and stroller as she ambled by me, not adhering to the 6 feet social distancing requirement. A friend has stopped shopping at Remark as their staff do not wear masks and don't social distance as the aisles there are quite narrow.

About 5 weeks ago Rebecca Zandbergen on CBC Radio's London Morning program questioned Dr. Brian Fisman, Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Toronto Dalla Lana School of Public Health on Dr. Mackie's lukewarm stance to the seriousness of COVID-19 and the need to introduce precautionary measures. Dr. Fisman said, "He has some funny ideas. He needs to start looking at the data."

Dr. Mackie said that "If we do reach higher disease levels at or near the peak levels we saw in April then we will certainly reconsider the order to more, all the way up to indoor spaces." Dr. Mackie's reactionary timing will put more medical front line workers in jeopardy and would cause those with cancelled elective surgeries to anxiously wait longer as more COVID-19 cases fill hospital beds.

Mandating mandatory masks in London-Middlesex is the right thing to do as an added proactive and precautionary layer to help us not go back to lockdown as we open up the economy and prepare for Stage 3. Going back to lockdown would increase the City's and Middlesex County's already high debt load. Please don't be so short sighted. We can't rule out a second wave.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Elizabeth Milne**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 16, 2020 10:52 PM  
**To:** Elizabeth Milne  
**Subject:** Mandatory masks - a request for thoughtful consideration and prompt action

Dear Ms. Milne,

Could you kindly forward this strong request to the Middlesex London Health Unit Board Members at your earliest convenience?

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Dear Board Members of the Middlesex London Health Unit:

I am contacting you to ask that you use your leadership to influence **mandating the use of masks in indoor public spaces** in our community to help fight COVID-19. This is especially crucial now, as we begin Stage 3 of reopening businesses.

There is enough evidence that masks can limit the spread of droplets and aerosols entering into the surrounding environment. Health Canada, the CDC, and the WHO have long recommended the use of masks in places where physical distancing is difficult, such as inside stores.

The Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) is among only a few regions (of the 34 Health Units in Ontario), to not mandate this essential safety measure. Currently in London masks are only 'recommended'. This approach to masking is not working, as not enough Londoners are wearing them. This poses an increased risk for our entire community.

We appreciate that currently our COVID-19 numbers are low, but we need to be proactive and do all that we can to keep them that way, especially as we enter Stage 3.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Elizabeth Milne

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 16, 2020 3:13 PM  
**To:** Elizabeth Milne  
**Subject:** Masks indoors at public places

Dear Ms. Milne: I am contacting you to ask that you use your leadership to influence **mandating the use of masks in indoor public spaces** in our community to help fight COVID-19. This is especially crucial now, as we begin Stage 3 of reopening businesses.

There is enough evidence that masks can limit the spread of droplets and aerosols entering into the surrounding environment. Health Canada, the CDC, and the WHO have long recommend the use of masks in places where physical distancing is difficult, such as inside stores.

The Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) is among only a few regions (of the 34 Health Units in Ontario), to not mandate this essential safety measure. Currently in London masks are only 'recommended'. This approach to masking is not working, as not enough Londoners are wearing them. This poses an increased risk for our entire community.

We appreciate that currently our COVID-19 numbers are low, but we need to be proactive and do all that we can to keep them that way, especially as we enter Stage 3. Please forward to all Board Members. Thank you.

[REDACTED]

**Elizabeth Milne**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 16, 2020 8:19 AM  
**To:** Elizabeth Milne  
**Subject:** London needs mandatory indoor mask mandate

Dear Ms Milne,

Please pass this message to the Board members of the London Health Unit: London needs a mandatory indoor mask mandate.

Taiwan, with a population of almost 24 million people, has had only 7 deaths from COVID 19 since January because everyone wears a mask indoors, and whenever social distancing is not possible; along with other protocols. There is need for protection, not lack of it. The statistics are clear in Canada, and around the world. Where masks are NOT worn, the disease spreads.

What benefit can there be to not placing this protocol in place? This concerned citizen requests a mandatory indoor mask mandate.

Thank you for your consideration of this serious concern.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Elizabeth Milne**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 16, 2020 12:03 AM  
**To:** Elizabeth Milne  
**Subject:** Mandatory masking from a home mask maker

Dear Elizabeth Milne,

Could you please ensure that my email (below) is forwarded to ALL Board members of the Middlesex-London Health Unit. Thank you in advance.

[REDACTED]  
-----  
Dear Middlesex-London Health Unit Board Members,

I was disappointed to learn on the news tonight that Dr. Chris Mackie is only **recommending** the use of masks in indoor public spaces instead of **mandating** them. I started making masks early on and have a special interest in watching people everywhere I go to see if they are abiding by this recommendation. I would say that they are not. Now that we are set to enter Stage 3 there will be an increased risk for Londoners, particularly at a time when many are becoming more complacent due to fatigue and a false sense of security, particularly the young.

Worldwide, the general recommendation to wear masks was a long time coming despite how obvious it seemed that it helped reduce coronavirus emissions. Just think where we might have been in the pandemic had people been encouraged to wear them earlier. In the same way, I think the time is already here to make masking mandatory in the London area, not down the road after the inevitable spikes increase suffering for people (and affect the economy if things had to tighten up again).

Please bring your influence to bear on Dr. Mackie to change his recommendation to an official mandate to help keep us safe. Lives depend on this measure.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,