

September 18, 2023

Honourable, Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health of Ontario  
Teresa Armstrong, MPP - London Fanshawe  
Terence Kernaghan, MPP - London North Centre  
Peggy Sattler, MPP - London West  
Rob Flack, MPP - Elgin-Middlesex-London  
Monte McNaughton, MPP - Lambton-Kent-Middlesex

## **RE: Letter of Support - Middlesex-London Health Unit 2024 Budget**

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I am writing to you today on behalf of Middlesex County Council and the residents of Middlesex County further to the Middlesex-London Health Unit 2024 Budget correspondence received on August 2, 2023, to express our unwavering support for the critical work being done by the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) and to bring to your attention the significant funding challenges for the upcoming year.

Firstly, I commend the provincial government for its steadfast commitment to the health and safety of Ontarians, particularly during the challenging times of the pandemic. We recognize the crucial role that public health plays in safeguarding the well-being of our communities. We also appreciate the recent public health funding announcements.

The MLHU, as a cornerstone of our public healthcare system, has consistently demonstrated its efficiency and effectiveness in delivering essential public health interventions to Middlesex County residents. These interventions not only protect our residents from infectious diseases but also prevent illnesses stemming from environmental exposures, promote healthy growth and development, prevent injuries and chronic diseases, and ensure our readiness to respond to public health emergencies. The impact of the MLHU's work extends far beyond the immediate crises, contributing to a healthier and more resilient Middlesex-London.

However, it is with concern that we comment on the projected funding challenges that the MLHU will face in 2024. The anticipated reduction in funding due to the conclusion of the School Focused Nurses Initiative and COVID-19 Extraordinary Expense Funding, coupled with the proposed shift of Mitigation Funding to municipal partners, presents a formidable financial hurdle. The rapid population growth in Middlesex-London over the past five years has placed greater demands on the Health Unit's services. Without adequate funding, the MLHU has noted that it foresees difficulties in meeting substantial components of the Ontario Public Health Standards in 2024. As mentioned in the August 2, 2023, letter, the new MLHU Strathroy Dental clinic is a critical example of an essential program in our communities.

Although capital funds were secured through the Ontario Seniors' Dental Care Program to establish this clinic, operational funding has not been allocated, leaving it in a precarious financial position. The Strathroy Dental clinic is of paramount importance as it brings essential routine dental services closer than ever to low-income seniors and children from low-income families in Middlesex County. This program not only addresses the critical oral health needs of vulnerable populations but also promotes overall well-being. The clinic has already generated a significant waitlist of clients eagerly seeking dental care, underscoring the demand and the urgency of securing operational funding to ensure its sustained operation.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and trust that you will consider our support of the MLHU funding requests for the benefit of the residents of Middlesex County and all Ontarians.

Thank you for your dedication to the health and safety of our province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Burghardt-Jesson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cathy Burghardt-Jesson  
Warden, Middlesex County

cc: Middlesex-London Board of Health