



February 24, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford:

**Re: Community Engagement to Address Food Insecurity**

At its meeting on February 16, 2023, the Board of Health carried the following resolution #08-23:

*BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts, in recognition of the root causes of food insecurity, call on the provincial government to incorporate local food affordability findings in determining adequacy of social assistance levels; and*

*THAT the Board of Health reaffirm its support for the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA) resolutions [A18-02](#) (Minimum Wage that is a Living Wage) and [A15-04](#) (Basic Income Guarantee); and*

*THAT the Board of Health intensify its work with relevant area agencies and community groups, and municipalities to shift the focus of food insecurity initiatives from food charity to income-based solutions, including but not limited to the sharing of data and evidence-based income solutions; and*

*FURTHER THAT the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts Board share this motion with area partners, Ontario boards of health, ALPHA, and the relevant provincial government ministers.*

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The health consequences of food insecurity have serious adverse effects on people's physical and mental health and the ability to lead productive lives. Ontarians living with food insecurity are at greater risk for numerous chronic conditions including mental health disorders, non-communicable diseases (e.g., diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease), and infections.<sup>1</sup> People who have chronic conditions and are food insecure are more likely to have negative disease outcomes, be hospitalized, or die prematurely.<sup>2</sup>

The health consequences of food insecurity are a significant burden on our province's healthcare and social service system. Adults in food insecure households are more likely to be admitted to acute care; they also may stay in hospital for a longer period and are more likely to be readmitted.<sup>3</sup> Income-based policies that effectively reduce food insecurity offset considerable public expenditures on healthcare and social services in Ontario by reducing demands on these services and reducing costs.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue – the solutions for which will not only help many Ontarians in need but also protect the sustainability of our critical health and social services resources.

Sincerely,



Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

cc: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health  
Honourable Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services  
Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
France G linas, Member of Provincial Parliament, Nickel Belt  
Jamie West, Member of Provincial Parliament, Sudbury  
Michael Mantha, Member of Provincial Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin  
All Ontario Boards of Health  
Constituent Municipalities

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<sup>1</sup> Tarasuk V, Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA. (2022). Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved 15 February 2023 from <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>.

<sup>2</sup> Tarasuk V, Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA. (2022). Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved 16 February 2023 from <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>.

<sup>3</sup> Tarasuk V. Implications of a basic income guarantee for household food insecurity. Northern Policy Institute – Research Paper No. 24. Retrieved 16 February 2023 from: <https://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Paper-Tarasuk-BIG-EN-17.06.13-1712.pdf>