



# PEGGY SATTLER

MPP London West  
Députée provinciale de London-Ouest

Hon. Sylvia Jones  
Minister of Health  
College Park 5th Floor, 777 Bay St.  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

December 21, 2023

Dear Minister Jones,

The Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) recently announced that they will be forced to lay off staff and cut programs because of a significant 2024 budget shortfall of \$2.6 to \$2.8 million, caused by the ongoing pressures of inflation and population growth without the necessary increase in provincial funding.

As you will recall, MLHU made your ministry, and other government Ministers and MPPs, aware of this projected shortfall months ago, urging the province to increase its investment in public health to avoid cuts to vital services and programs. It is unfortunate that this plea was ignored. Your government's failure to address the financial pressures facing health units not only means the loss of critical services for our community, but also compromises MLHU's ability to meet Ontario Public Health Standards. Among the program areas identified for disinvestment, MLHU will cut about half of the nurses currently providing comprehensive school health programming, reduce capacity to support local municipalities in healthy public policy development, decrease involvement in local task forces, coalitions and agencies that benefit from their expertise, and cut spending on public health education and awareness campaigns. This will negatively affect the overall health of the Middlesex-London community and have a particular detrimental impact on those who are vulnerable, including seniors, children, new parents, newcomers, and members of racialized communities.

Minister, these layoffs and program reductions are a direct and predictable result of your government's effective cuts to health unit funding – by refusing to adjust for inflation and population growth – and repeated attempts to download public health costs to cash-strapped municipalities. At a time when Londoners experience growing difficulty accessing the healthcare they need, MLHU's programs and services are more important than ever. We cannot look away from our responsibility to protect public health.

My community is counting on you to make every investment necessary to restore MLHU staff and programming and support the uninterrupted continuation of MLHU's important work. Further, as your government prepares for the 2024 Ontario Budget, I urgently appeal to you to ensure sufficient and stable funding to maintain the public health services that are essential to protect population health, now and in the future.

I look forward to your timely response and swift action.

Sincerely,

Peggy Sattler, MPP  
London West

cc. MPP France Gélinas, Ontario NDP Health Critic  
Matt Newton-Reid, Chair, Board of Health, Middlesex-London Health Unit  
Dr. Alex Summers, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Middlesex-London Health Unit

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