

CORRESPONDENCE – March 2022

a) Date: February 23, 2022

Topic: Health and Racial Equity: Denouncing Acts and Symbols of Hate

From: Dr. Penny Sutcliffe, Medical Officer of Health/Chief Executive Officer, Sudbury and District Public Health

To: Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, President, Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa)

Background:

On February 23, 2022, Dr. Penny Sutcliffe wrote to Dr. Paul Roumeliotis to notify alPHa that the Sudbury and District Board of Health passed a motion at their February 17, 2022 Board of Health meeting to denounce hateful acts, symbols of hate and discrimination in public health. Health equity and the social determinants of health have been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is vital to emphasize that public health continues to conduct this important work.

Recommendation: Endorse.



Public Health
Santé publique
SUDBURY & DISTRICTS

February 23, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Paul Roumeliotis
President
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
480 University Avenue, Suite 300
Toronto, ON M5G 1V2

Dear Dr. Roumeliotis:

Re: Health and Racial Equity: Denouncing Acts and Symbols of Hate

At its meeting on February 17, 2022, the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts carried the following resolution #08-22:

WHEREAS the reduction of health inequities is a goal of Ontario's public health programs and services as set out in the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), health equity is a Foundational Standard of the OPHS, and programs and services must be implemented in accordance with the Health Equity Guideline which includes the requirement to apply anti racist, anti-oppressive, and culturally safe approaches to public health practice; and

WHEREAS the Vision of the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts, Healthier communities for all, is further guided by its Mission and Strategic Plan, both of which prioritize action in support of health equity; and

WHEREAS the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts is a leader among Ontario local public health agencies in their longstanding commitment to health and racial equity, including notably, the September 2019 endorsement of the Racial Equity Action Framework for Improved Health Equity; and

WHEREAS recent events in Ontario have included public displays of racism, anti-Semitism and discrimination, all detrimental to optimal health for all and prompting the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) on January 31, 2022, to issue the following statement:

While the right to protest is a fundamental element of our democracy, OPHA is disturbed by the hate filled racist and white supremacist symbols and messages flowing from the demonstrations in Ottawa. We denounce all forms of hate, bigotry, racism, antisemitism, and discrimination. Acts and

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symbols of hate are unwelcome and should not be tolerated. Silence is not acceptable. We urge political leaders from all levels & parties to speak out against such hate and racism, and to promote the importance of vaccines and other public health measures that are protecting all of us, especially the most vulnerable, against illness, hospitalization, & death. Change can only happen when we stand up and speak out. Let's work together to build a society that values diversity, inclusion, and optimal health for all.

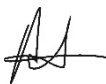
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts endorse the January 31, 2022, statement of the OPHA; and

FURTHER THAT the Board of Health encourage other Ontario boards of health and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies to do the same; and

FURTHER THAT that this resolution be shared with all boards of health, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, area Honorable Members of Parliament and Provincial Parliament, the Ontario Public Health Association, the Association Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), among other stakeholders.

A reduction of health inequities is a goal of Ontario's public health programs and services as set out in the OPHS. Both ALPHA and local Boards of Health have a long-standing history of supporting various health equity measures (e.g., food security, Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action, living wage, low-income dental, use of a health equity lens, national pharmacare, extending the Ontario Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Nutritional Allowance). Thanks to efforts like these, public health addresses the social determinants of health and promotes health equity. There is still work to be done. Recent events in Ontario have included public displays of racism, anti-Semitism and discrimination, all detrimental to optimal health for all. In supporting health for all, it is important that public health not remain silent and instead state that acts and symbols of hate are unwelcome and should not be tolerated. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



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

cc: All Ontario Boards of Health
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Pageen Walsh, Executive Director, Ontario Public Health Association
Jamie McGarvey, President, Association of Municipalities Ontario
Jamie West, Member of Provincial Parliament, Sudbury
France G elinas, Member of Provincial Parliament, Nickel Belt
Michael Mantha, Member of Provincial Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin
Paul Lefebvre, Member of Parliament, Sudbury
Marc Serr e, Member of Parliament, Nickel Belt
Carol Hugues, Member of Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing