

Hastings Prince Edward Public Health Board of Health Meeting

Information Items

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

Listing of Information Items Board of Health Meeting – February 7, 2024

1. Peterborough Public Health - Letter to Minister Sylvia Jones re adequate funding for the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program dated November 27, 2023.
2. Peterborough Public Health – Letter to Ministers Bethlenfalvy and Jones re support for healthy public policy regarding alcohol marketplace and product sales dated November 29, 2023 – endorsement of Huron Perth Public Health.
3. Peterborough Public Health – Letter the Doug Ford re Bill 93, Joshua’s Law (lifejackets for life), 2023 dated November 29, 2023 - endorsement of Huron Perth Public Health.
4. Peterborough Public Health – Letter to Minister Jones re Bill 103, Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act (Vaping is not for kids), 2023 dated December 4, 2023 - endorsement for Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit.
5. Peterborough Public Health – Letter to Doug Ford, Ministers Jones and Parsa re income-based policy interventions to effectively reduce household food insecurity – endorsement of Algoma Public Health.
6. Peterborough Public Health – Letter to Minister Jones re inclusion of monitoring food affordability in the updated Ontario Public Health Standards dated December 4, 2023.
7. North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit – Letter to Doug Ford, Ministers Jones and Parsa re modernizing alcohol marketplace and product sales dated December 1, 2023.
8. North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit – Letter to Doug Ford, Ministers Jones and Parsa re intimate partner violence and public health action dated December 13, 2023.
9. Peterborough Public Health – Letter to Doug Ford, Ministers Jones and Tibollo re public health strengthening dated January 5, 2024.
10. Timiskaming Health Unit – Letter to Doug Ford, Ministers Jones and Tibollo re public health strengthening and chronic disease prevention dated January 8, 2024 – endorsement of Sudbury and District Public Health.
11. Sudbury & Districts Public Health – Letter to Doug Ford re Household food insecurity dated January 24, 2024.
12. Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) – 2024 – Fill the Gaps Closer to Home Report Backgrounder.

The above information items can be found on the Hastings Prince Edward Public Health’s website through the link in the Agenda Package or by going to our website at hpePublicHealth.ca.

November 27, 2023

Hon. Sylvia Jones,
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Jones:

Re: Adequate Funding for the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health (PPH) to bring to your attention concerns about the funding model for the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP), and the resulting limitations for access to service promised to Ontarians. Low income and a lack of insurance play the dominant role in limiting people's ability to access oral health care, so PPH appreciates the Ministry of Health's vision to advance oral health equity through access to comprehensive oral health care for seniors.

As stated by the Ministry of Health, the OSDCP provides access to free dental services to seniors aged 65 and over who meet the required income conditions and do not have dental benefits either through private insurance or other government programs. Further, it states, if you are accepted into the program, you can access dental services by contacting your local public health agency (LPHA).

These statements imply that those who meet the eligibility criteria will be provided that service once they have demonstrated eligibility and contacted their LPHA. Unfortunately, due to the limitations of an annualized budget process and significant delays in confirming any in-year adjustments, those seeking these services have had to be told the service is not available at this time, despite the existence of capacity in the community to provide this service.

Early in the 2023 fiscal year, it was recognized by our PPH dental team that demand for services by eligible clients within the OSDCP would surpass the approved annual budget. After several discussions with Ministry staff, we learned that requests for additional funds could not be made until November 2023, and approval of these requests would be received in January 2024, at the earliest. Our Board, therefore has been forced to decide what services to continue beyond the budget approval levels and assume the risk that the funding request may not be approved.

Since Boards of Health are not permitted to run a deficit, our Board has committed to retaining essential services for the balance of 2023, with the expectation the additional \$200,000 required to meet this minimum service level will be approved by the Ministry. In addition to the funding risk, this decision will mean many referrals for those in need of dental care will be delayed until 2024. Lastly, the Board has also instructed staff that, if the one-time funding to support the extraordinary program pressures in 2023 is not received, to cease service delivery once the budget is exhausted in 2024 and beyond.

On behalf of our Board, I urge you to ensure this program is adequately funded in all LPHAs and that systems for in-year adjustments are provided in a timely manner so that eligible clients needing service are not forced to wait unnecessarily. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Councillor Kathryn Wilson
Chair, Board of Health

/ag

cc: Hon. Raymond Cho, Ontario Minister for Seniors and Accessibility
Local MPPs
Age-Friendly Peterborough
Peterborough District Dental Society
Ontario Dental Association
Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association
Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry (OAPHD)
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa)

November 29, 2023

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
Minister.fin@ontario.ca

Hon. Sylvia Jones,
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Dear Honourable Ministers:

Re: Support for Healthy Public Policy Regarding Alcohol Marketplace and Product Sales

At its November 8, 2023 meeting, the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health considered and endorsed correspondence from Huron Perth Public Health regarding the Ontario Public Health Association's (OPHA) letter to you dated May 31, 2023 on [modernizing alcohol and marketplace sales](#).

The OPHA recommends that the government implement the following policy measures to mitigate the harms Ontarians will experience with increased sales and consumption of alcohol, including:

1. Reduce retail density, especially in low socio-economic status (SES) neighbourhoods.
2. Maintain or decrease hours of sale, with no exceptions.
3. Strengthen Ontario's alcohol pricing policies including taxation, minimum pricing or other means.
4. Stop further privatization of alcohol sales.
5. Apply a whole of government, health-in-all-policies approach to alcohol modernization.

In addition, PPH fully supports Huron Perth's additional recommendation that "a health equity lens should be applied when considering the potential impacts of policy levers, consequences, and public health impacts as a result of this modernization of the alcohol marketplace and product sales", given that harms disproportionately affect people of lower socioeconomic status.

I trust you will consider our efforts, along with Huron Perth and the advocacy of others, who continue to urge the Government of Ontario to strengthen rather than further erode alcohol policies to protect the health of Ontarians.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Councillor Kathryn Wilson
Chair, Board of Health

/ag
Encl.

cc: Hon. Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Health and Addictions
Local MPPs
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)



The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance
 The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
 Legislative Building, Queen's Park
 Toronto ON M7A 1A1

September 8, 2023

Re: Support for Healthy Public Policy Regarding Alcohol Marketplace and Product Sales

Dear Minister Bethlenfalvy and Minister Jones,

Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH) Board of Health made a motion on September 8, 2023, to endorse the Ontario Public Health Association's (OPHA) letter to you dated May 31, 2023 (attached), titled *'Modernizing alcohol marketplace and product sales'*.

The letter from the OPHA implores the Government of Ontario to not increase access, availability or affordability of alcohol and points to Ontario's report card for alcohol policy being downgraded to an F from the Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation (CAPE) 3.0 report released in 2023. This is a clear call for the need for, and room for, policy improvement in Ontario.¹

The OPHA recommends five essential policy measures to decrease alcohol-related harms; all of which are supported by research:

1. Reduce retail density, especially in low socio-economic status (SES) neighbourhoods.
2. Maintain or decrease hours of sale, with no exceptions.
3. Strengthen Ontario's alcohol pricing policies including taxation, minimum pricing, or other means.
4. Stop further privatization of alcohol sales.
5. Apply a whole of government, health-in-all-policies approach to alcohol modernization.

Evidence shows that alcohol is a risk factor for numerous chronic diseases, including cancers, as well as injuries and violence. Alcohol consumption in Huron Perth is an ongoing concern. According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, in 2015 to 2020, 21.6% of adults in Huron Perth residents, ages 19 years and older reported drinking at a high-risk level (7+ drinks) in the past week.² This was significantly higher than the comparable provincial average of 16.3%.²

¹ Naimi, T., Stockwell, T., Giesbrecht, N., Wetlaufer, A., Vallance, K., Farrell-Low, A., Farkouh, E., Ma, J., Priore, B., Vishnevsky, N., Price, T., Asbridge, M., Gagnon, M., Hynes, G., Shelley, J., Sherk, A., Shield, K., Solomon, R., Thomas, G. & Thompson, K. (2023). Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation 3.0: Results from Ontario. Victoria, BC: Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, University of Victoria.

² Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). 2015-2020. Statistics Canada.



Results from the latest COMPASS survey (2022-23) show that 45% of high school students in Huron Perth who responded to the survey reported drinking alcohol in the past month, and 28% reported binge drinking in the past month.³ The letter from OPHA encompasses recommendations that would be beneficial to Huron Perth communities and residents.

Research has found that people of lower socioeconomic status tend to experience greater harms associated with alcohol consumption than those of high socioeconomic status.^{4,5} HPPH Board of Health recommends that a health equity lens is applied when considering the potential impacts of policy levers, consequences, and public health impacts as a result of modernization of the alcohol marketplace and product sales. We strongly encourage the above five policy measures to be implemented to reduce alcohol-related health harms and burden of diseases.

Sincerely,

Bernie Maclellan
Chair, Huron Perth Public Health

cc:

The Honourable Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and Member of Provincial Parliament Huron-Bruce
Mr. Matthew Rae, Member of Provincial Parliament Perth-Wellington
All Ontario Boards of Health

³ Bredin C, Leatherdale ST. Methods for linking COMPASS student-level data over time. COMPASS Technical Report Series. Huron Perth Public Health. 2022-23. Waterloo, Ontario: University of Waterloo. Available at: www.compass.uwaterloo.ca

⁴ World Health Organization (WHO). 4 June 2021. Addressing alcohol consumption and socioeconomic inequalities: how a health promotion approach can help. Snapshot series on alcohol control policies and practice. Brief 1.

⁵ Bloomfield K. Understanding the alcohol-harm paradox: what next? The Lancet Public Health 2020; 5: e300–e301

November 29, 2023

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford

Re: Bill 93, Joshua's Law (Lifejackets for Life), 2023

At its November 8, 2023 meeting, the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health considered and endorsed correspondence from Huron Perth Public Health regarding the implementation of Bill 93, Joshua's Law (Lifejackets for Life), 2023

I trust you will consider our efforts, along with Huron Perth and the advocacy of others, who continue to voice their support for the passing and implementation of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Councillor Kathryn Wilson
Chair, Board of Health

/ag
Encl.

cc: Hon. Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation
Local MPPs
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHa)



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

September 8, 2023

Re: Bill 93, Joshua's Law (Lifejackets for Life), 2023

Dear Premier Ford:

At their September 8, 2023 meeting, the Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH) Board of Health received a staff report (attached) and passed a motion supporting the implementation of Bill 93, Joshua's Law (Lifejackets for Life), 2023.

The matter of boating safety and drowning prevention is important to HPPH and our residents and visitors alike within Huron and Perth counties. According to the [2023 Drowning Report](#) from the Lifesaving Society, which looked at data specific to water-related fatalities in Ontario between 2015-2019, 46% of water-related fatalities occurred in a lake and the 19% on a river. Being that Huron and Perth counties have lakes and rivers that residents and visitors both boat on and swim in, these statistics are particularly alarming and cause for concern. This report also notes that, according to [The Royal Life Saving Society Canada](#), 58% of water related fatalities in Ontario involve a motor boat, and not wearing a life jacket is a factor in over 80% of fatalities in all age categories.

Wearing a life jacket is the most important preventative measure individuals across the lifespan can take to prevent a drowning incident. Not wearing lifejackets has been, and continues to be, identified as the most common risk factor in drowning deaths beyond childhood. Huron Perth Public Health Board of Health encourages you to support the passing and implementation of Bill 93.

Thank you for your attention on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Bernie Maclellan
Chair, Huron Perth Public Health

cc:

The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health

The Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation

The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and Member of Provincial Parliament Huron-Bruce

Mr. Matthew Rae, Member of Provincial Parliament Perth-Wellington

Association of Local Public Health Agencies

All Ontario Boards of Health

December 4, 2023

Hon. Sylvia Jones,
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Jones:

Re: Bill 103, Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act (Vaping is not for Kids), 2023

At its November 8, 2023 meeting, the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health considered and endorsed correspondence from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit regarding the implementation of Bill 103, Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act (Vaping is not for Kids), 2023.

The proposed requirements of Bill 103 to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act would have a positive impact on the health of Ontarians. Bill 103's focus on increased efforts to prevent youth uptake through reducing availability and restricting advertising of vaping products, along with requiring that specialty vape stores obtain store location approval from the local board of health, will ultimately result in decreased nicotine addiction and prevent future stress on Ontario's healthcare system.

Peterborough Public Health would be happy to work with your government in supporting the changes proposed within Bill 103 as part of our efforts to reduce the burden of harmful substance use.

I trust you will consider our efforts, along with Simcoe Muskoka and the advocacy of others, who continue to voice their support for the passing and implementation of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Councillor Kathryn Wilson
Chair, Board of Health

/ag
Encl.

cc: France G  linas, Member of Provincial Parliament, Nickel Belt
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Local MPPs
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHa)



September 7, 2023

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
College Park 5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Jones:

Re: Bill 103, Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act (Vaping is not for Kids), 2023

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are addicting youth to nicotine at an alarming rate. Between 2017-2019, vaping rates doubled among Ontario students in grades 7-12. In Simcoe Muskoka, 32% of students in grades 7-12 and 43% of high school students reported using an e-cigarette in the past year. This is particularly concerning when considering the highly addictive effects of nicotine in e-cigarettes is associated with an increased risk for future tobacco cigarette use among youth who vape (Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, 2018). Further, there are significant health risks associated with youth vaping as a result of the toxic and carcinogenic substances in devices including lung damage, changes to the brain, burns, dependence or addiction, difficulty learning, and increased anxiety and stress.

As chair of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) Board of Health I am writing in support of Public Health Sudbury and Districts letter on June 28, 2023 regarding Bill 103, Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act (Vaping is not for Kids), 2023. Bill 103's focus on preventing youth uptake of vaping is important to decrease morbidity and mortality and keep Ontarians out of the healthcare system now and in the future. This includes prohibiting the promotion of vapour products, raising the minimum age for purchasing vapour products and requiring that specialty vape stores obtain store location approval from the Board of Health.

Such amendments proposed by Bill 103 align with the philosophy of previous positions of the Board of Health, which have been focused on reducing nicotine and tobacco use in our communities. This includes previous Board communications to the Province of Ontario and the Federal Government in support of the previous 2017 Tobacco Endgame for Canada (committing to a target of less than 5% tobacco use in Canada by 2035), supporting previous tobacco tax increases (2018) and a 2014 letter to the Director General, Health Products and Food Branch Inspectorate regarding the increased use and availability of electronic cigarettes.

In 2023, the Board of Health called on the Ontario government to establish a renewed smoking, vaping and nicotine strategy which was supported from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies and the linked [letter](#) was sent in August 2023 to the Ontario Minister of Health. Such communications to government have been supported by SMDHU's comprehensive approach to smoke-free programming via education, promotion and

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Cookstown:
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705-458-1103
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Gravenhurst:
2-5 Pineridge Gate
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705-684-9090
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Huntsville:
34 Chaffey St.
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705-789-8813
FAX: 705-789-7245

Midland:
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Midland, ON
L4R 1X8
705-526-9324
FAX: 705-526-1513

Orillia:
120-169 Front St. S.
Orillia, ON
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705-325-9565
FAX: 705-325-2091

enforcement efforts which are required to manage increasing youth vaping rates through strategies that prevent nicotine addiction such as the [Not An Experiment](#) initiative.

The proposed requirements of Bill 103 to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act would have a positive impact on the health of Ontarians, in particular for the youth. Bill 103, if passed, would result in reducing the availability of vape devices and restrict vaping product advertising that has resulted in an increase in nicotine addiction and increasing present and future stress on the healthcare system. SMDHU would be happy to work with your government in supporting the changes proposed within Bill 103 as a part of our comprehensive strategy to reduce youth vaping and decrease nicotine addiction.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL Signed By:

Ann-Marie Kungl, Board of Health Chair
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

AMK:CG:SR:sh

cc: France G  linas, Member of Provincial Parliament, Nickel Belt
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
All Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies

References

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Berenbaum E, Keller-Olaman S, Manson H, Moloughney B, Muir S, Simms C, Singh H, Watson K. Current evidence on e-cigarettes: a summary of potential impacts. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2018.

December 4, 2023

Hon. Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
premier@ontario.ca

Hon. Sylvia Jones
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Hon. Michael Parsa
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford, Ministers Jones and Parsa:

Re: Income-based policy interventions to effectively reduce household food insecurity (HFI)

On behalf of the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health, I am writing in support of Algoma Public Health's recommendations for income-based policy interventions to address household food insecurity.

In Peterborough between 2020-2022, nearly 1 in 5 households faced food insecurity.¹ This is the highest prevalence estimate we have ever seen. Peterborough's 2023 food affordability monitoring results show that many residents struggle to afford food and housing.² In 2023, there was less money left after residents paid for food and rent than the year before, and in many cases, people faced deficits.

Research indicates that income responses are needed to address household food insecurity.³ Sufficient income to meet basic needs supports people to be physically and mentally healthy, and to make meaningful contributions to society.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Councillor Kathryn Wilson
Chair, Board of Health

/ag
Encl.

cc: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Local MPPs
Local MPs
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)

¹ Public Health Ontario. *Response to Scientific / Technical Request: Household Food Insecurity Estimates from the Canadian Income Survey: Ontario 2019-2022; 2023.*

² Peterborough Public Health. Ontario Nutritious Food Basket Data, 2023.

³ ODPH Position Statement on Responses to Food Insecurity: Ontario Dietitians in Public Health. 2023. Available from: <https://www.odph.ca/odph-position-statement-on-responses-to-food-insecurity-1>.

July 4, 2023

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Delivered via email: premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Deputy Premier
Minister of Health
Delivered via email: sylvia.jones@pc.ola.org

The Honourable Michael Parsa
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Delivered via email: michael.parsaco@pc.ola.org

Dear Premier Ford, Deputy Premier and Minister Jones, and Minister Parsa:

Re: Income-based policy interventions to effectively reduce household food insecurity (HFI)

On June 28, 2023, the Board of Health for Algoma Public Health (APH) passed a resolution endorsing income-based policy interventions to effectively reduce household food insecurity (HFI), which is an urgent public health problem that imposes serious consequences to the health and well-being of Ontarians.

HFI is inadequate or insecure access to food due to household financial constraints.^(1, 2) It is a sign of poverty, rooted in a lack of adequate and stable income to make ends meet. In 2022, more than 2.8 million Ontarians were food insecure, and this will only get worse with recent sky-rocketing inflation.⁽³⁾

Locally, APH monitors food affordability as required by the *Ontario Public Health Standards*. Our local data shows that low-income households, especially those receiving Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), struggle to afford basic costs of living and will be increasingly vulnerable as food prices continue to rise.⁽⁴⁾

Not being able to afford adequate food has profound adverse effects on people's physical and mental health and their ability to lead productive lives. This creates a heavy burden on the health care system with adults living in severely food insecure households incurring 121% higher health care costs compared to food secure households.⁽⁵⁾ Effective income policies to reduce food insecurity could offset considerable public expenditures on health care and improve overall health.

Blind River
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9B Lawton Street
Blind River, ON P0R 1B0
Tel: 705-356-2551
TF: 1 (888) 356-2551
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Elliot Lake
ELNOS Building
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Elliot Lake, ON P5A 1Y9
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Fax: 705-848-1911

Sault Ste. Marie
294 Willow Avenue
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 0A9
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Wawa
18 Ganley Street
Wawa, ON P0S 1K0
Tel: 705-856-7208
TF: 1 (888) 211-8074
Fax: 705-856-1752

Food charity is NOT a solution to the problem. Food banks may provide temporary food relief but do not address the root causes. Only about one-quarter of households experiencing food insecurity go to food banks and for those who do use them, food insecurity does not go away.⁽²⁾

We urge the province to collaborate across sectors to implement income-based policies that effectively reduce food insecurity, such as^(1, 2, 5)

- increasing minimum wage to a rate that better reflects costs of living, such as a living wage,
- raising social assistance to reflect costs of living,
- indexing Ontario Works to inflation, and
- reducing income tax rates for the lowest income households.

Such income policies preserve dignity, address the root cause of the problem, give choice of which foods to buy, and ensure the basic right to food.

Sincerely,



Sally Hagman
Chair, Board of Health,

cc: Dr. J. Loo, Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer for Algoma Public Health
Local Councils
Local MPs
The Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health

References:

1. Tarasuk V, Li T, Fafard St-Germain A-A. Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021. 2016. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Household-Food-Insecurity-in-Canada-2021-PROOF.pdf>
2. ODPH Position Statement on Responses to Food Insecurity: Ontario Dietitians in Public Health. 2023. Available from: <https://www.odph.ca/odph-position-statement-on-responses-to-food-insecurity-1>.
3. New data on household food insecurity in 2022. PROOF, 2023. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>
4. Food affordability in Algoma infographic. 2023.
5. alPHA Resolutions- Determinants of health. Resolution A05-18, Adequate Nutrition for works and Ontario Disability Support Program Participants and Low Wage Earners; Resolution A15- 4, Public Health Support for a Basic Income Guarantee; Resolution A18-2, Public Health Support for a Minimum Wage that is a Living Wage. Association of Local Public Health Agencies, 2009. https://www.alphaweb.org/page/Resolutions_SDOH

December 4, 2023

Hon. Sylvia Jones
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Jones:

Re: Inclusion of Monitoring Food Affordability in the Updated Ontario Public Health Standards

The Board of Peterborough Public Health is writing to you following a staff report and presentation on local food affordability at its November 8, 2023 meeting. The Board recognizes the need to continue to monitor food affordability and food access in local public health agency jurisdictions and requests that this is maintained in the updated Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS).

The 2018 OPHS Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol¹ requires Boards of Health to monitor food environments, including food access and affordability. Food affordability monitoring has taken place for decades, as outlined in a provincial protocol prior to 2018. Monitoring food affordability provides important data used by community partners to inform local, provincial and national policy solutions to address household food insecurity.

Household food insecurity is a serious public health problem that is associated with poorer physical and mental health.² Upstream solutions have the potential to reduce the financial burden of food insecurity on public health care. It is critical to prioritize the monitoring of this public health problem, as we look to building a stronger, more equitable health system that meets the needs of underserved populations.

The significance of monitoring food affordability to support efforts to address household food insecurity reflects the critical importance of local evidence gathering, and health promotion in Ontario, which we hope will be strongly reflected in the new standards. We welcome further engagement regarding the development of the new standards, to help ensure that they are informed by local public health agencies and the needs and opportunities in their communities.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Councillor Kathryn Wilson
Chair, Board of Health

/ag

cc: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Local MPPs
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)

¹ Ontario Public Health Standards Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol. 2018. Available from: https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/protocols_guidelines/Population_Health_Assessment_Surveillance_2018_en.pdf

² PROOF (2023). What are the implications of food insecurity for health and health care? Available from: <https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/what-are-the-implications-of-food-insecurity-for-health-and-health-care/>

December 1, 2023

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

The Honourable Doug Ford
 Premier of Ontario
 Legislative Building, Room 281
 Queens Park
 Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
 Minister of Health / Deputy Premier
 777 Bay Street, College Park, 5th Floor
 Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

The Honourable Michael Parsa
 Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
 438 University Avenue, 7th Floor
 Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

Dear Premier Ford, Minister Jones, and Minister Parsa:

RE: Modernizing Alcohol Marketplace and Product Sales

On behalf of the Board of Health for North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit), please accept this correspondence highlighting our concern about alcohol policy in Ontario and the impact of increased access. At its meeting on November 22, 2023, the Board of Health carried the following resolution #BOH/2023/11/05:

WHEREAS, Alcohol is a well-established risk factor for death, disease (including certain cancers, cardiovascular disease, liver disease), disability, unintentional injury, risky behaviour, social problems, and violence or aggressive behaviour;

WHEREAS, The Health Unit district has significantly higher rates of emergency department visits and hospitalizations due solely to alcohol consumption, compared to Ontario;

WHEREAS, The Health Unit district has significantly higher rates of heavy drinking episodes for persons aged 19 years or older compared to Ontario;

WHEREAS, Increased availability and affordability of alcohol has a particularly negative impact on school-aged Ontarians, for whom the risk of adverse outcomes from drinking is greater than adults. Alcohol is a leading risk factor for worsening academic performance, injury, violence, suicide, and death in youth;

WHEREAS, Within the Health Unit district a majority of high schools (87%) and almost two-thirds of post-secondary institutions (63%) are within a 3km distance of an alcohol retailer;

WHEREAS, When alcohol becomes more available and affordable, there is an associated increase in healthcare costs, lost productivity, criminal justice and other direct costs;

Your lifetime partner in healthy living.
 Votre partenaire à vie pour vivre en santé.

myhealthunit.ca

📍 345 Oak Street West,
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📠 705-474-8252

📍 90 Bowes Street, Suite 201,
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☎ 1-800-563-2808
 705-746-5801

📠 705-746-2711



To: Premier Ford, Minister Jones, and Minister Parsa

Page 2 of 3

Date: December 1, 2023

WHEREAS, The 2019 regulatory changes that have led to the relaxation of alcohol control policies have already placed Ontarians at an increased risk of harms and health related outcomes;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Health endorse the Letter from the Ontario Public Health Association on Modernizing Alcohol Marketplace and Product Sales to raise awareness about, and work to reduce the impact of increased access to alcohol; and

FURTHERMORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Health call on the Province of Ontario to implement the following policy measures:

- *Reduce retail density*
- *Maintain or decrease hours of sale, with no exceptions*
- *Strengthen Ontario's alcohol pricing policies including taxation, minimum pricing or other means.*
- *Stop further privatization of alcohol sales*
- *Apply a whole of government, health-in-all-policies approach to alcohol modernization.*

The 2019 regulatory changes that have led to the relaxation of alcohol control policies have already placed Ontarians at an increased risk of harms and health related outcomes and may have contributed to alcohol related emergency room and hospital visits in Ontario. Increased availability and affordability of alcohol has a particularly negative impact on school-aged Ontarians, for whom the risk of adverse outcomes from drinking is greater than adults. As alcohol retail density increases, especially near schools, youth are more likely to adopt or maintain high risk drinking behaviours.

The Board of Health respectfully urges the Provincial Government to implement policy measures that reduce access to alcohol and help to prevent negative health outcomes and healthcare costs associated with alcohol use.

Sincerely,

Rick Champagne
Chairperson, Board of Health

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To: Premier Ford, Minister Jones, and Minister Parsa

Page 3 of 3

Date: December 1, 2023

Carol Zimbalatti, M.D., CCFP, MPH
Medical Officer of Health/Executive Officer

Copy to:

Vic Fedeli, MPP, Nipissing
Graydon Smith, MPP, Parry Sound-Muskoka
John Vanthof, MPP, Timiskaming-Cochrane
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)
Health Unit Member Municipalities

References:

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December 13, 2023

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Room 281
Queens Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health / Deputy Premier
777 Bay Street, College Park, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Michael Parsa
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
438 University Avenue, 7th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3

Dear Premier Ford, Minister Jones, and Minister Parsa:

RE: Intimate Partner Violence and Public Health Action

On behalf of the Board of Health for North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit), please accept this correspondence highlighting the need to advance local and provincial action on monitoring, preventing, and reducing Intimate Partner Violence, and adverse events experienced by children with violence or abuse in the family unit. As a local public health unit, we are engaged in this work as per the following Ontario Public Health Standards: Healthy Growth and Development (including Health Babies Healthy Children Program); Substance Use and Injury Prevention; and Foundational (such as Population Health Assessment and Health Equity). At its meeting on November 22, 2023, the Board of Health carried the following resolution #BOH/2023/11/04:

WHEREAS, the Ontario Public Health Standards identifies violence as a topic for consideration within the Substance Use and Injury Prevention Standard and requires public health units to use a comprehensive health promotion approach that addresses risk and protective factors to reduce the burden of preventable injuries in the health population;

WHEREAS, the Ontario Public Health Standards require public health units to monitor and assess trends related to injuries;

WHEREAS, public health units and their programs, such as Healthy Babies Healthy Children and Sexual Health, respond to disclosure of Intimate Partner Violence or support disclosing of Intimate Partner Violence within individual client care using best practices;

WHEREAS, it is well documented that Intimate Partner Violence is a serious preventable problem that significantly impacts victims and their children with effects across the lifespan and has considerable societal costs associated with medical and mental health services, lost productivity, and criminal justice and child welfare costs;

WHEREAS, responding to and preventing Intimate Partner Violence requires urgent and sustained evidence-based interventions by multisectoral agencies at a local and provincial level that are effective in preventing violence, and effective in changing risk and increasing protective factors, especially in adolescents and young adults;

WHEREAS, Intimate Partner Violence is generally underreported. Locally reported police, victim, and healthcare service data likely does not represent the full extent of Intimate Partner Violence, nor the risk and nature of the abuse and how it varies across specific population groups (e.g., 2sLGBTQ+, Indigenous) and age groups. Local level survey data is not available on Intimate Partner Violence, as collected through the Statistics Canada General Social Survey on Canadian's Safety (Victimization), or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit is committed to being a member on the Violence against Women Coordinating Committee (VAWCC) of Nipissing and VAWCC of Parry Sound, and support the efforts of staff to research and consult with local, regional, and provincial experts and community partners to enhance surveillance methodologies, knowledge of effective prevention strategies, promotion of local services, and capacity for collective action and evaluation; and,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Health call on the Province of Ontario to invest in surveillance and analytical methodologies at a provincial and local public health unit level to gain a better understanding of the prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence and Adverse Childhood Experiences and to permit monitoring of trends, and data-informed action; and,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Health call on the Province of Ontario to develop a Provincial Intimate Partner Violence strategy to support the identification, implementation, evaluation, and monitoring of effective violence prevention strategies; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Health call on the Province of Ontario and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to increase the funding allocated to the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Home Visiting program that is operated out of local public health units. The program directly services individual parents who need more support. Within this work, staff respond to disclosure of Intimate Partner Violence or support disclosing of Intimate Partner Violence. The annual budget for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program has not increased in over 10 years.

Intimate Partner Violence which can include physical, sexual, and/or emotional harm toward a current or former intimate partner, is a serious preventable problem that significantly impacts victims and their children with effects across the lifespan.

On an individual level, exposure to Intimate Partner Violence has been associated with negative impacts to social functioning, mental health, and physical health. In addition, it has been well established through research, that children exposed to violence in the family either directly, or through witnessing interparental violence are at increased risk of intimate partner violence experiences in adolescence and adulthood. Domestic abuse is recognized as an Adverse Childhood Experience. Adverse childhood experiences, otherwise known as ACEs is a term used to describe negative, stressful, traumatizing events that occur before the age of 18 years. They are associated with risk of serious physical, mental health, and neurobiological problems, and more exposure to adverse events predicts greater risk in later years. There is a need to invest in interventions that are effective in preventing violence, or effective in changing risk and increasing protective factors. Research indicates that Intimate Partner Violence starts early in the lifespan, in adolescents and young adults, highlighting the need for early prevention efforts, and interventions targeting this population.

The Board of Health respectfully urges the Provincial Government to invest in surveillance and data-informed strategies at a provincial and local level that will help to monitor trends, prevent and reduce intimate partner violence; reduce adverse childhood experiences; and, increase resilience and protective factors to decrease the likelihood of future risk, such as becoming a victim, or perpetrator of violence.

Sincerely,



Rick Champagne
 Chairperson, Board of Health



Carol Zimbalatti, M.D., CCFP, MPH
 Medical Officer of Health/Executive Officer



To Premier Ford, Minister Jones, and Minister Parsa
 Page: 4 of 4
 December 13, 2023

Copy to:

Vic Fedeli, MPP, Nipissing
 Graydon Smith, MPP, Parry Sound-Muskoka
 John Vanthof, MPP, Timiskaming-Cochrane
 Ontario Boards of Health
 Health Unit Member Municipalities
 The Honourable Michael Kerzner (Solicitor General of Ontario)
 Josée Bégin (Assistant Chief Statistician, Statistics Canada)
 Chairs of the VAWCC of Nipissing and VAWCC of Parry Sound

References:

1. Statistics Canada, Victims of police-reported family and intimate partner violence in Canada, 2021. 2022 Oct. 19.
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January 5, 2024

#9

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Deputy Minister / Minister of Health
sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

The Honourable Michael Tibollo
Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
michael.tibollo@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford and Ministers Jones and Tibollo,

RE: Public Health Strengthening

At its meeting on December 13th meeting, the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health received a presentation on the importance of investment in health promotion strategies and a diversified skilled workforce to deliver impactful local public health activities.

The Health Promotion Ontario's [White Paper on the Value of Local Health Promotion in Ontario, 2023](#), stated the value of local health promotion delivered by local public health agencies and how it is an effective strategy in addressing Ontario's Health Care crisis. It recommends strong and sustained investment in local health promotion by public health units to ensure that health promotion is prioritized on an ongoing basis. The Chief Public Health Officer of Canada's report: [The Chief Public Health Officer of Canada's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada, 2023](#) also underscored the importance of health promotion strategies for ensuring resilience and preparedness in the face of pandemics and emergencies.

Public health strategies are only impactful if there is appropriately resourced, skilled and diversified workforce to deliver them. The Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health's 2022 report [Being Ready: Ensuring Public Health Preparedness for Infectious Outbreaks and Pandemics](#) outlines the importance of funding an adequate and skilled, adaptable and resilient public health workforce that is cross trained in core public health work and has the surge capacity to meet the current and future needs of Ontario.

There are opportunities for system improvements as part of the review of Board of Health roles and responsibilities announced under the government's Public Health Strengthening initiative. The Board of Health respectfully urges the Provincial Government to ensure local Public Health Units are supported to invest in coordinated action to promote health and reduce the burden of chronic diseases, substance use and injuries and increase health equity. This includes both maintaining the current breadth and scope of health promotion work outlined by the Ontario Public Health Standards and a continued investment of a skilled and diversified public health workforce.

We also respectfully request that the Chief Medical Officer of Health ensure proactive engagement in the sector-driven review of the Ontario Public Health Standards.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Councillor Kathryn Wilson
Chair, Board of Health

/ag

cc: Dr. Kieran Moore, Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health
Local MPPs
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies.



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January 8, 2024

#10

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health

The Honourable Michael Tibollo
Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions

Dear Premier Ford and Provincial Ministers Jones and Tibollo:

Re: Public Health Strengthening and Chronic Disease Prevention

On December 6, 2023, at a regular meeting of the Board for the Timiskaming Health Unit, the Board received the [briefing note](#) and the following motion was passed:

Motion (#63R-2023):

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Timiskaming Board of Health endorse Public Health Sudbury and District's [Motion #60-23](#) "Public Health Strengthening and Chronic Disease Prevention" (Appendix A) and send a letter indicating this endorsement to Premier Ford and Ministers Jones and Tibollo.

The Timiskaming Health Unit fully supports the above recommendations. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stacy Wight, Board of Health Chair

c: Ontario Boards of Health
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies



January 24, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

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

Dear Recipient:

Re: Household Food Insecurity

At its meeting on January 18, 2024, the Board of Health carried the following resolution #06-24:

WHEREAS food security is a chronic and worsening health issue as documented by annual local data on food affordability and as recognized by multiple Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA) resolutions: [A05-18](#) (Adequate Nutrition for Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program), [A18-02](#) (Minimum Wage that is a Living Wage), [A15-04](#) (Basic Income Guarantee), and [A23-05](#) (Monitoring Food Affordability in Ontario and the Inadequacy of Social Assistance Rates)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts call on the provincial government to incorporate local food affordability findings in determining adequacy of social assistance rates to reflect the current costs of living and to index Ontario Works rates to inflation going forward; and

THAT in the context of the Public Health Strengthening roles and responsibilities deliberations, the Board of Health urge all health system partners to remain committed to population health assessment and surveillance as it relates to monitoring food environments and, specifically, to monitoring food affordability; and share this motion broadly with local and provincial stakeholders.

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Household food insecurity is one of the strongest predictors of poor health, making it a serious public health issue (PROOF, 2023). Individuals who are food insecure are at higher risk of diet-related diseases like diabetes and are at higher risk for a wide range of chronic conditions such as depression and anxiety disorders, arthritis, and chronic pain. Household food insecurity leaves an indelible mark on children's health and well-being (PROOF, 2023). The experience of food insecurity in childhood is associated with mental health concerns throughout childhood and into early adulthood (PROOF, 2023). In Ontario, the healthcare costs of individuals who are the most food insecure can be more than double that of individuals who are food secure (PROOF, 2023, Tarasuk et al., 2015).

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: Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Honourable Peter Bthlenfalvy, Ministry of Finance
Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
France Gélinas, Member of Provincial Parliament, Nickel Belt
Jamie West, Member of Provincial Parliament, Sudbury
Michael Mantha, Member of Provincial Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Jacqueline Edwards and Jennifer Babin-Fenske, Co-chairs, Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council
Richard Lathwell, Local Food Manitoulin
Colleen Hill, Executive Director, Manitoulin Family Resources
All Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies

PROOF (2023). What are the implications of food insecurity for health and health care? Identifying Policy Options to Reduce Household Food Insecurity in Canada. Retrieved from:

<https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/what-are-the-implications-of-food-insecurity-for-health-andhealth-care/>

Tarasuk, V., Cheng, J., de Oliveira, C., Dachner, N., Gundersen, C., Kurdyak, P. (2015). Association between household food insecurity and annual healthcare costs. Canadian Medical Association Journal. 1 87 (14) E429-E436. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.150234>

Fill the Gaps Closer to Home

Improving Access to Services for Rural Ontario

ROMA has issued a comprehensive report focused on improving access to health and social services in rural areas. The report builds on ROMA's 2022 study, *Opportunities for Rural Ontario in a Post-COVID World*, which focused on rural growth and resiliency. This study identified equitable access to services as a key theme.

Developed through extensive consultation, ROMA's *Fill the Gaps Closer to Home* report conveys the desperation shared by many residents and local leaders in health care, community services and municipal government.

While health care is a provincial responsibility, it is a critical priority for municipal governments – particularly because rural municipal governments often deal with the costly social and economic consequences of Ontario's health care crisis in their own communities.

For rural Ontario, the cost alone is over \$480 million in contributions to health and social service programs. With fewer households and businesses, rural property taxes cannot be expected to subsidize provincial costs to this degree.

Rural Ontario is different, bearing a disproportionate burden of the Ontario-wide health care crisis

- **Acute lack of primary care:** An estimated 525,000 rural residents do not have access to primary care. The number of people without access is growing four times faster than urban areas.
- **Emergency department (ED) closures:** In both 2022 and 2023, there were more than 600 temporary ED closures – a phenomenon that hits rural Ontario harder and more often. When a rural ED closes, the next available hospital can be hours away.
- **Scarce mental health and addictions services:** People experiencing these illnesses in rural Ontario face a daunting challenge, as access to services is limited to non-existent. In fact, 65% of municipal representatives surveyed said residents don't have access to walk-in clinics. And 60% also said that their community lacked mental health and addictions support.
- **Shortage of health care workers:** The shortage of professional health care workers is felt most deeply in rural areas. Rural doctors carry heavy patient loads – it can take three new doctors to fill the gap of just one retiree.

- The priority must be on fixing the primary care crisis, including creating new and integrated models to deploy health care providers more effectively in rural areas.
- Immediate solutions are needed to expand and accelerate the number of health care professionals graduating from post-secondary.
- ROMA is urging the Province to make full use of the scope of practice for nurses, nurse practitioners and paramedics, to fill gaps closer to home.
- Rural communities are finding creative ways to use community paramedicine to fill local needs quickly. Community paramedicine has potential to support a broad range of health care challenges, from long-term care to mental health and homelessness. A more integrated, 100% provincially funded, approach for community paramedicine as part of the continuum of care is needed.
- Protect and properly fund public health emergency response and prevention programs in rural Ontario.

Rural municipal governments must have a seat at their Ontario Health Team tables.

- Despite \$481 million in contributions to operating and/or funding long-term care, paramedics and public health, only 10% of municipal survey respondents said their local Ontario Health Team had meaningfully engaged them.
- Rural municipal services impact the social determinants of health that are critical to understanding community health-care needs. Economic development, community housing, safe streets, recreation, and much more are the foundation to community health and well-being.
- Ontario Health Teams must have provincial funding and support to redefine health-care delivery:
 - » Shift demand from emergency departments to more appropriate forms of care, including investing in an integrated, full range of community care.
 - » Address social determinants of health through inter-professional collaboration.
 - » Support and fund community-focused innovation.

The ROMA report demonstrates the urgent need for a different approach to health service design, delivery and funding in Rural Ontario.

Using the Province's traditional top-down approach, implementation of new ideas will fail. The Province must defy convention and use the policy, regulatory and fiscal tools at its disposal in new ways. Only then, will rural Ontarians see an integrated health care system that delivers real access to health services. The required transformation should start today.