

Board Correspondence

May 2023

Date	From	Subject
April 3, 2023	City of Hamilton, Mayor	Letter to Minister of Health: support for sufficient, stable and sustained funding for local public health agencies.
April 6, 2023	Minister's Office	News Release: COVID-19 Booster Recommended for High-Risk Individuals This Spring
April 11, 2023	Public Health Sudbury & Districts	Letter to Premier of Ontario – Minimum wage increase.
April 17, 2023	alPHa	April 2023 Infobreak
April 24, 2023	Township of Ewanturel	Thank you letter to the Timiskaming Health Unit for the unwavering support during the COVID-19 pandemic.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF HAMILTON

April 3, 2023

VIA: Mail and Email

ATTN: Hon. Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
5th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
Sylvia.Jones@pc.ola.org

RE: 2023 PHS Annual Service Plan & Budget Submission; Support for Sufficient, Stable and Sustained Funding for Local Public Health Agencies

Dear Hon. Sylvia Jones,

The Board of Health (BOH) for the City of Hamilton Public Health Services is committed to achieving our mandate of keeping Hamiltonians healthy, preventing disease, and reducing health inequities as articulated in the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS). However, we have concerns about our ability to meet the growing needs of our community with current provincial funding. At its meeting on March 20, 2023, the BOH endorsed the following recommendations included in Board of Health Report BOH23011:

- That the Board of Health reiterate their call to the Ministry of Health to fully fund the provincial portion, at least 70%, of the total costs of the mandatory public health programs and services provided under the Ontario Public Health Standards;

- That the Board of Health reiterate their call to the Ministry of Health to continue the current mitigation funding until such time as the cost-shared arrangement is restored to 75%/25% for all cost-shared programs and that the Province once again assumes 100% funding for those programs identified as such in the public health budget for 2018-2019; and,
- That the Board of Health call on the Ministry of Health to include expectations for on-going COVID-19 response in the Ontario Public Health Standards and provide permanent funding to sustain these requirements.

As with other health units across the province, the deployment of significant Hamilton Public Health Services (HPHS) staff to the COVID-19 emergency response for over 2.5 years meant less ability to focus on other important public health issues. This impacted service delivery in many program areas and resulted in service backlogs and deficits of care in our community. Now that we have emerged from the crisis phase of the COVID-19 response, HPHS has been working to resume OPHS-mandated programs and services and address the deficits of care, while also continuing to respond to COVID-19. In addition, many long-standing health issues have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and require focus and attention in planning and resourcing in order to achieve significant gains. HPHS has identified priority action areas to address Hamilton's priority population health needs of child and youth healthy growth and development, climate change, health equity, and mental health and substance use.

In October 2021, Hamilton's previous BOH wrote to the previous Health Minister endorsing letters from Peterborough Public Health and the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit identifying the need for additional ongoing support as Ontario's public health units continued to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, support was requested to relieve the following financial pressures:

- Increased wage, benefit and operational costs due to inflation;
- New and expanded programs that were added to the OPHS;
- Resources required to address deficits of care;
- Increased demand for public health services to support community pandemic recovery; and,
- Continued support for COVID-19 response.

In 2022, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA) submitted a report to the provincial government to further demonstrate the need for additional investments in public health required to clear the service backlog, resume routine programs and services, and maintain an effective pandemic response. Recently, as part of their 2023 pre-budget submission, ALPHA re-iterated their call to the Province to immediately revert to the 75%/25% provincial-municipal public health cost-sharing formula, along with a pledge to continue 100% funding for programs that have been traditionally underwritten by the Province. Furthermore, in his 2022 Annual Report entitled "Being Ready, Ensuring Public Health Preparedness for Infectious Outbreaks and Pandemics" the Chief Medical Officer of Health calls for sustained investments in strengthening the

public health sector to ensure preparedness. Hamilton's BOH endorses these calls for sufficient and sustained funding for public health and agrees that it is more efficient and effective to invest in preparedness than to pay the much higher and heavier costs of being unprepared.

Through HPHS' 2023 ASPB submission it has been assessed that even with the provincial mitigation funding, the anticipated provincial subsidy will only be approximately 70% of the total costs of mandatory programs in 2023, a shortfall of \$2.3M. With the mitigation funding expected to end in 2023, HPHS will have substantial cost pressures in 2024 and beyond. For HPHS to fully address Hamilton's priority population health needs, restoration of the mixed 75%/25% Provincial/Municipal and 100% Provincial funding model is required.

Additionally, COVID-19 requires dedicated resources to sustain the on-going response, including case and contact management, outbreak management, infection prevention and control, immunization, surveillance, communication, pandemic preparedness and enforcement activities. The Hamilton BOH agrees with ALPHA that language in the public health mandate (i.e., OPHS) and permanent funding is required to sustain these efforts.

Realizing these substantial cost pressures in 2023 and beyond, the Hamilton BOH urges the provincial government to:

- Fully fund the provincial portion, at least 70%, of the total costs of the mandatory public health programs and services provided under the OPHS;
- Continue the current mitigation funding until such time as the cost-shared arrangement is restored to the mixed 100% and 75%/25% model as it was in the public health budget for 2018-2019; and,
- Include expectations for on-going COVID-19 response in the OPHS and provide permanent funding to sustain these requirements.

The work of public health, done in collaboration with local partners and within the broader public health system, results in a healthier population that contributes to a stronger economy while preserving costly and scarce health care resources. For the health of our population, it is critical that public health be adequately resourced. A clear commitment by the Province to developing a process that ensures timely, predictable and sufficient funding is needed. While mitigation funding from the Province has been helpful, clearer and more timely assurances of funding for both routine and extraordinary public health activities will be required to inform budgets over multiple years.

Our Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, would be happy to meet with your staff to discuss this further as well.

Sincerely,



Andrea Horwath

Mayor

City of Hamilton

CC:

Hon. Neil Lumsden, MPP, Hamilton East – Stoney Creek

Monique Taylor, MPP, Hamilton Mountain

Sarah Jama, MPP, Hamilton Centre

Sandy Shaw, MPP, Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas

Donna Skelly, MPP, Flamborough-Glanbrook

Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health

Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA)

Ontario Boards of Health



Public Health
Santé publique
SUDBURY & DISTRICTS

April 11, 2023

VIA EMAIL

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

Dear Premier Ford:

Re: Minimum Wage Increase

Public Health Sudbury & Districts (Public Health) would like to extend its sincere congratulations to the Ontario government for the increase of the minimum to \$16.55 an hour in the fall. Public Health supports the government's efforts to help individuals and families combat the cost of living. The announced 6.8 per cent pay raise is a positive step to assist workers who are still struggling post-pandemic with rising costs of housing, food, and transportation.

Our support for an increase in minimum wage comes from overwhelming evidence confirming the link between income and health, whereby health improves every step of the income ladder. Adequate income not only removes the barriers, stressors, and challenges to achieving health but also decreases the risk of premature morbidity and mortality and increases physical and mental health across the life course. In relation to health and income, the Board of Health passed a Motion (#53-19), Opportunities for All – Poverty Reduction on November 21, 2019:

WHEREAS income is one of the strongest predictors of health and local data show that low income is associated with an increased risk of poor physical and mental health in Sudbury and districts; and

WHEREAS Public Health Sudbury & Districts annual Nutritious Food Basket reports demonstrate that individuals and families reliant on the current provincial social assistance rates or that earn a minimum wage will experience challenges in supporting their health including meeting their nutrition requirements; and

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Letter to the Premier of Ontario
Re: Minimum Wage Increase
April 11, 2023
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WHEREAS income solutions incorporate the health enhancing influence of work while addressing food security and the health damaging impacts of insufficient income; and

WHEREAS the Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre calculated a living wage for Sudbury of \$16.98 (current provincial minimum is \$14.00), and the City of Greater Sudbury proclaimed November 3 – 9, 2019 as Living Wage Week; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts formally endorse the principle of living wage employment and direct the Medical Officer of Health to pursue certification; and

FURTHER that the Board encourages all employers across our service area to recognize the serious health and societal costs of inadequate income.

While we welcome this increase, we think it is important to underscore that minimum wage is the lowest wage rate an employer can pay an employee, which is different from a living wage. A living wage is an income sufficient for families to pay for the basic necessities of life so they can live with dignity and participate as active citizens in our society. The current living wage calculation for Sudbury and districts is \$19.70 per hour compared to the newly announced minimum wage for the province in the fall of \$16.55.

Our agency is dedicated to building a resilient and healthy workplace and to encouraging this approach across employers in the communities that we serve. In support of this, Public Health is certified as a Living Wage Employer. All staff members qualify for a living wage, which reflects the income workers must bring home to meet their basic living needs and participate more fully in life, work, and community.

Public Health Sudbury & Districts is a progressive public health agency committed to improving health and reducing social inequities in health. The minimum wage, even with the upcoming increase, will fall short of the income needed for individuals to pay for basic needs. As your government considers future adjustments to the minimum wage, we urge you to consider the living wage rate calculations for Ontarians, with the understanding that an adequate income aligned with a living wage can contribute to increased physical and mental health outcomes of Ontarians and reduce costs associated with premature morbidity and mortality.

Sincerely,



René Lapierre
Chair, Board of Health

Letter to the Premier of Ontario
Re: Minimum Wage Increase
April 11, 2023
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cc: All Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
Honourable Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and
Skills Development
Jamie West, Member of Provincial Parliament, Sudbury
France G  linas, Member of Provincial Parliament, Nickel Belt
Michael Mantha, Member of Provincial Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin-
Kapusking

April 24, 2023

Timiskaming Health Unit
247 Whitewood Ave
Unit 43
New Liskeard, ON
P0J 1P0

Att: Dr. Glenn Corneil
Acting Medical Officer of Health

Dear Dr. Corneil,

Re: Timiskaming Health Unit Support – COVID-19 Pandemic

The Council and Staff of the Corporation of the Township of Evanturel wish to thank you and your team at the Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) for your unwavering support to the Township of Evanturel, and other municipalities in the District of Timiskaming, during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Municipality is well aware of the burden placed on the THU during the height of the Pandemic; and the additional follow-up that will be required for some time to come.

The District of Timiskaming is very fortunate to have the THU address the continuous health needs of its residents!

Yours truly,



Virginia Montminy
Clerk
The Corporation of the
Township of Evanturel

RECEIVED
APR 27 2023
TIMISKAMING HEALTH
UNIT (NL)