

## Board Correspondence

June 2022

Date	From	Subject
April 29, 2022	Grey Bruce Health Unit	Ltr to Ministry of Health – ltr to support aPHa’s resolution A21-2 for public health to lead and coordinate the response to address the Opioid Crisis.
May 2, 2022	Peterborough Public Health	Motion to support Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit re: Response to the Opioid Crisis in Simcoe Muskoka and Ontario-wide.  Motion to support Windsor-Essex County Health Unit re: Ontario Regulation 116-20, Work Deployment Measures for Boards of Health.
May 6, 2022	Windsor-Essex County Health Unit	Ltr to Ministry of Health – to support Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit re: Response to the Opioid Crisis in Simcoe Muskoka and Ontario-wide.



April 29, 2022

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health  
Ministry of Health  
5th Floor  
777 Bay St.  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 2J3

The Honourable Michael A. Tibollo  
Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions  
Ministry of Health  
Frost Building South, 6th Floor  
7 Queen's Park Cres  
Toronto, ON  
M7Z 1Y7

Dear Minister Elliott and Associate Minister Tibollo:

Thank you for your continued commitment to the health of Ontarians during these trying times.

Under your leadership, the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit excelled in leading the way out of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency in the Grey Bruce region by working within the provincial framework. We mobilized the community, garnering the support of the public, our partners, and stakeholders, to successfully address and manage the pandemic.

By applying the same engagement and emergency-response tools, our key strategic direction for the coming years is to lead and coordinate the response to the growing opioid crisis in our region, and across the province.

The Grey Bruce Board of Health's commitment to the strategic direction was translated to a resolution from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA). We called on all stakeholders and levels of government to capitalize on the momentum generated from combating COVID-19 by channeling their collective efforts in response to the opioid crisis as soon as practical, given the impact of the pandemic.

Attached you will find a letter addressed to your office from ALPHA referencing this resolution.

Within our community and in collaboration with health and non-health sector partners, Grey Bruce Public Health has taken the lead in utilizing new initiatives to address the complexities of mental health issues and addiction. We used a robust framework to manage an outbreak in a semi-shelter housing multiple people who struggle with substance use. This framework has benefitted residents in multiple complex settings in Grey Bruce, and by virtue of its success, the model has been replicated by other regions in Ontario.

Grey Bruce Public Health nimbly applies lessons learned from socially complex outbreaks. We launched a community outreach model targeting people who are not attached to the health system and who have challenges related to social determinants of health. The community

*A healthier future for all.*

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outreach model is a great example of engagement and collaboration under the leadership of Public Health.

With our demonstrated commitment to addressing mental health and addiction within our community, and with our ability to apply the same engagement and emergency-response tools that we found successful in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, we write to you with the following objectives:

- To recommend the establishment of a provincial task force to address the opioid crisis
- To strongly recommend a Grey Bruce Board of Health member sits on this proposed task force
- To maintain a direct connection with your office to keep you posted on milestones of community empowerment to address the opioid crisis
- To ensure an ironclad connection between local public health initiatives and the provincial level with a centralized goal of successful knowledge translation.

In closing, we reiterate our thanks for your continued support and leadership. We look forward to discussing these key objectives with each of you in the near future.

Regards,



Ms. Sue Paterson  
Chair of the Board of Health



Dr. Ian Arra, MD MSc FRCPC ACPM ABPM  
Medical Officer of Health & CEO

Grey Bruce Health Unit  
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Phone: (519)376-9420, Ext. 3940 Fax: (519)376-0605

cc: Honourable Bill Walker MPP for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound  
Honourable Lisa Thompson MPP for Huron-Bruce  
Honourable Jim Wilson MPP for Simcoe-Grey  
Warden for Bruce, Warden Janice Jackson  
Warden for Grey, Warden Selwyn Hicks  
Ontario Boards of Health

Encl.



Association of Local  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
Agencies

alPHa's members are  
the public health units  
in Ontario.

**alPHa Sections:**

Boards of Health  
Section

Council of Ontario  
Medical Officers of  
Health (COMOH)

**Affiliate  
Organizations:**

Association of Ontario  
Public Health Business  
Administrators

Association of  
Public Health  
Epidemiologists  
in Ontario

Association of  
Supervisors of Public  
Health Inspectors of  
Ontario

Health Promotion  
Ontario

Ontario Association of  
Public Health Dentistry

Ontario Association of  
Public Health Nursing  
Leaders

Ontario Dietitians in  
Public Health

480 University Ave., Suite 300  
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E-mail: info@alphaweb.org

July 20, 2021

Hon. Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health  
5th Floor, 777 Bay St.  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Elliott,

**Re: alPHa Resolution A21-2, Public Health to Lead and Coordinate the Response to Address the Opioid Crisis Capitalizing on the Momentum of Managing the COVID-19 Emergency**

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On behalf of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) and its member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations, I am writing today to inform you of the attached resolution, which was passed by our membership at its recent Annual General Meeting.

alPHa Resolution A21-2 calls for an enhanced leadership and coordination role for public health in addressing the opioid crisis by making the most of its strong networks, capacity for community mobilization, and ability to quickly translate policy into action during a crisis. The utility of each of these has been clearly demonstrated throughout the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and should be similarly applied to addressing the opioid crisis.

The Ontario Public Health Standards clearly outline the obligations of local public health agencies for programs and services designed to prevent substance use and reduce associated harms. The current opioid overdose crisis has long been considered a major public health issue and is one that has been severely aggravated by the current pandemic. We look forward to capitalizing on the momentum of our success in responding to one crisis to responding to another.

We hope that you will take this resolution into careful consideration and would be pleased to discuss it with you further. To schedule a meeting, please have your staff contact Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, alPHa, at [loretta@alphaweb.org](mailto:loretta@alphaweb.org) or 416-595-0006 ext.222.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Paul Roumeliotis,  
alPHa President

**COPY:** Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health

**Encl.**



Association of Local  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
Agencies

**alPHa Resolution A21-2**

**Title:** Public Health to Lead and Coordinate the Response to Address the Opioid Crisis Capitalizing on the Momentum of Managing the COVID-19 Emergency

**Sponsor:** Grey Bruce Health Unit

**WHEREAS** public health has been the leading agency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency; and

**WHEREAS** public health excelled in mobilizing the community and partners to address the pandemic; and

**WHEREAS** public health successfully managed the pandemic; and

**WHEREAS** the opioid epidemic is a public health issue that predates the COVID-19 pandemic by over a decade; and

**WHEREAS** evidence shows that in many areas throughout Ontario, the COVID-19 pandemic is compounding the opioid crisis, with substance use related harms significantly increasing throughout the duration of the pandemic; and

**WHEREAS** boards of health are mandated under the Ontario Public Health Standards to reduce the burden of preventable injuries associated with substance use;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Association of Local Public Health Agencies call on all stakeholders and levels of government to capitalize on the momentum in combating COVID-19 and channel the above efforts to lead and coordinate the community and partners to address the opioid crisis as soon as soon as practical, taking into account the impact of the pandemic.

***ACTION FROM CONFERENCE: Carried as Amended***

May 2, 2022

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health  
[christine.elliott@ontario.ca](mailto:christine.elliott@ontario.ca)

**Re: Provincial Opioid Crisis Response**

Dear Minister Elliott:

At its meeting on April 13, 2022, the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health (PPH) considered correspondence from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and passed the following motion:

*That the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health:*

- *receive the letter dated March 16, 2022 from Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) for information;*
- *endorse the following actions recommended by SMDHU:*
  1. *Create a multi-sectoral task force to guide the development of a robust provincial opioid response plan that will ensure necessary resourcing, policy change, and health and social system coordination.*
  2. *Expand access to evidence informed harm reduction programs and practices including lifting the provincial cap of 21 Consumption and Treatment Service (CTS) Sites, funding Urgent Public Health Needs Sites (UPHNS) and scaling up safer opioid supply options.*
  3. *Explore revisions to the current CTS model to address the growing trends of opioid poisoning amongst those who are using inhalation methods.*
  4. *Expand access to opioid agonist therapy for opioid use disorder through a range of settings (e.g. mobile outreach, primary care, emergency departments), and a variety of medication options.*
  5. *Provide a long-term financial commitment to create more affordable and supportive housing for people in need, including people with substance use disorders.*
  6. *Address the structural stigma and harms that discriminate against people who use drugs, through provincial support and advocacy to the Federal government to decriminalize personal use and possession of substances and ensure increased investments in health and social services at all levels.*
  7. *Increase investments in evidence-informed substance use prevention and mental health promotion initiatives that provide foundational support for the health, safety and well-being of individuals, families, and neighbourhoods, beginning from early childhood.*
- *communicate this support by writing to Minister Elliott, with copies to the following: Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Attorney General of Ontario, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Local MPs and MPPs, Local Councils, Ontario Health, Association of Local Public Health Agencies, and Ontario Boards of Health.*

The harms related to opioid use have increased at an unprecedented and alarming rate in Peterborough County and City, currently double the provincial average and since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this opioid crisis, a provincially supported and coordinated, multi-sectoral approach is needed.

The approach should address the social determinants of health and include early prevention and harm reduction strategies alongside substance use disorder treatment strategies. The public health response should also include policy to address the structural stigma and harms that discriminate those who use drugs.

The PPH Board of Health fully supports the above-noted recommendation, and thanks you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

***Original signed by***

Mayor Andy Mitchell  
Chair, Board of Health

/ag  
Encl.

cc: Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions  
Attorney General of Ontario  
Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Local MPs and MPPs  
Local Councils  
Ontario Health  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Ontario Boards of Health

March 16, 2022

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Elliott:

**Re: Response to the Opioid Crisis in Simcoe Muskoka and Ontario-wide**

On March 16, 2022, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) Board of Health endorsed a set of provincial recommendations to help address the ongoing and escalating opioid crisis experienced within Simcoe Muskoka and province-wide. Despite regional activities in response to the opioid crisis, there remains an urgent need for heightened provincial attention and action to promptly and adequately address the extensive burden of opioid-related deaths being experienced by those who use substances.

In the 19 months of available data since the start of the pandemic (March 2020 to September 2021) there have been 245 opioid-related deaths in Simcoe Muskoka. This is nearly 70% higher than the 145 opioid-related deaths in the 19 months prior to the start of the pandemic (August 2018 to February 2020), when our communities were already struggling in the face of this crisis. The first nine months of 2021 saw an opioid-related death rate more than 33% higher than the first nine months of 2020, suggesting the situation has not yet stabilized.

As such, the SMDHU Board of Health urges your government to take the following actions:

1. Create a multisectoral task force to guide the development of a robust provincial opioid response plan that will ensure necessary resourcing, policy change, and health and social system coordination.
2. Expand access to evidence informed harm reduction programs and practices including lifting the provincial cap of 21 Consumption and Treatment Service (CTS) Sites, funding Urgent Public Health Needs Sites (UPHNS) and scaling up safer opioid supply options.
3. Explore revisions to the current CTS model to address the growing trends of opioid poisoning amongst those who are using inhalation methods.
4. Expand access to opioid agonist therapy for opioid use disorder through a range of settings (e.g. mobile outreach, primary care, emergency departments), and a variety of medication options.
5. Provide a long-term financial commitment to create more affordable and supportive housing for people in need, including people with substance use disorders.
6. Address the structural stigma and harms that discriminate against people who use drugs, through provincial support and advocacy to the Federal government to decriminalize personal use and possession of substances and ensure increased investments in health and social services at all levels.

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7. Increase investments in evidence-informed substance use prevention and mental health promotion initiatives, that provide foundational support for the health, safety and well-being of individuals, families, and neighbourhoods, beginning from early childhood.
8. Fund a fulltime position of a Drug Strategy Coordinator/Lead for the Simcoe Muskoka Opioid Strategy.

The SMDHU Board of Health has endorsed these recommendations based on the well-demonstrated need for a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach that addresses the social determinants of health and recognizes the value of harm reduction strategies alongside substance use disorder treatment strategies, as part of the larger opioid crisis response. Evidence has shown that harm reduction strategies can prevent overdoses, save lives, and connect people with treatment and social services. Further, there is an urgent need to change the current Canadian drug policy to allow a public health response to substance use, through decriminalization of personal use and possession paired with avenues towards health and social services, as our Board called for in 2018. These recommendations collectively promote effective public health and safety measures to address the social and health harms associated with substance use.

Sincerely,

**ORIGINAL Signed By:**

Anita Dubeau  
Board of Health Chair  
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

cc: Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions  
Attorney General of Ontario  
Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Ontario Health  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Members of Parliament in Simcoe Muskoka  
Members of Provincial Parliament in Simcoe Muskoka  
Mayors and Municipal Councils in Simcoe Muskoka

May 2, 2022

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health  
[christine.elliott@ontario.ca](mailto:christine.elliott@ontario.ca)

**Re: Extension of Ontario Regulation 116/20, Work Deployment Measures for Boards of Health**

Dear Minister Elliott:

At its meeting on April 13, 2022, the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health (PPH) considered correspondence from the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and passed the following motion:

*That the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health:*

- *receive the letter dated March 16, 2022 from Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) for information;*
- *endorse the position from WECHU, and the originating request from the Association of Ontario Public Health Business Administrators dated February 9, 2022 regarding extending Ontario Regulation 116/20 Work Deployment Measures for Boards of Health for the duration of public health units' response to the COVID-19 pandemic; and,*
- *communicate this support to Minister Elliott, with copies to the Premier of Ontario, the Ontario Chief Medical of Health, local MPPs, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, and Ontario Boards of Health.*

The PPH Board of Health fully supports the above recommendation, and thanks you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

***Original signed by***

Mayor Andy Mitchell  
Chair, Board of Health

/ag  
Encl.

cc: Premier of Ontario  
Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Local MPPs  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Ontario Boards of Health

March 30, 2022

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health and Deputy Premier  
Ministry of Health  
College Park 5th Floor, 777 Bay St  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Elliott:

**Letter of Support – Ontario Regulation 116/20, Work Deployment Measures for Boards of Health**

On March 24, 2022 at a regular meeting of the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health, the Board considered a letter from Cynthia St. John, President of the Association of Ontario Public Health Business Administrators (AOPHBA) to Dr. Kieran Moore, CMOH, requesting that Dr. Moore consider extending **Ontario Regulation 116/20 Work Deployment Measures for Boards of Health for the duration of public health units' response to the COVID-19 pandemic**. The following motion was passed:

**Motion:** That the WECHU Board of Health support the letter from the AOPHBA to the CMOH, Dr. Kieran Moore, requesting that Work Deployment Measures for Boards of Health be extended for the duration of public health units' response to the COVID-19 pandemic.  
**CARRIED**

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit fully supports the above recommendation, and thanks you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gary McNamara, Chair  
Windsor-Essex County Board of Health

c: Nicole Dupuis, CEO, WECHU  
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, aPHa  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Dr. Kieran, Moore, CMOH  
Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

Sent via email to: [Kieran.moore1@ontario.ca](mailto:Kieran.moore1@ontario.ca)

February 9, 2022

Dr. Kieran Moore  
Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Ministry of Health

**RE: Ontario Regulation 116/20, Work Deployment Measures for Boards of Health**

Dear Dr. Moore,

On behalf of the Association of Ontario Public Health Business Administrators (AOPHBA), I am writing to you concerning the Ontario Regulation 116/20, Work Deployment Measures for Boards of Health.

This Regulation, in place since April 2020, has proven invaluable in ensuring that public health units (PHUs) are able to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since April 2020, public health work has evolved and changed rapidly in response to both local and provincial directions and demands in areas such as case and contact management, outbreak management in our most vulnerable settings, the development and implementation of the vaccination program, and the continued support and leadership provided to community partners including businesses, municipalities, schools, health related agencies, etc.

It is the opinion of the Association Executive that public health units' continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic will be significantly negatively impacted if PHUs do not have the flexibility necessary to deploy staff how and where needed. PHUs have one or more unions within their employ and many of our members have noted that the restrictions of the various collective agreements often do not allow redeployment of PHU staff to different roles or different areas within the PHU, nor assignment of work on weekends, evenings, and holidays, all of which have been critical to vaccine clinics. The flexibility that this Ontario Regulation provides is critical to our ability to continue to plan and execute both local and provincial directives in line with our mandate, for the balance of 2022.

We respectfully ask that you consider extending Ontario Regulation 116/20 Work Deployment Measures for Boards of Health for the duration of public health units' response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,



Cynthia St. John  
President  
Association of Ontario Public Health Business Administrators (AOPHBA)

c. Brent Feeney, Manager, Funding and Oversight, Office of the CMOH, Ministry of Health  
Teresa Bendo, Secretary, AOPHBA  
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa)

May 6, 2022

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health and Deputy Premier  
Ministry of Health  
College Park 5th Floor, 777 Bay St  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Elliott:

**Letter of Support – Response to the Opioid Crisis in Ontario-Wide**

On April 21, 2022 at a regular meeting of the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health, the Board considered a letter from Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit endorsing a set of recommendations for the province of Ontario and provincial Ministry of Health to help address the escalating opioid crisis province-wide.

Over the last five years, the region of Windsor-Essex County (WEC) has also experienced a worsening opioid and drug overdose crisis. In 2021, there were a total of 416 opioid-related emergency department visits reported in WEC, which is 58 more than those reported for in 2020 (358) and nearly quadruple those which were reported for in 2016 (108).<sup>1,2</sup> The WEC community also observed a total of 68 opioid-related deaths in 2020, which represents the highest number of annual opioid deaths recorded in WEC since reporting began in 2005.<sup>2</sup> These upward trends are expected to continue as local data becomes available for 2021, with 33 opioid-related mortalities recorded in the first seven months of the annual period alone (January to July of 2021).<sup>1</sup>

The following motion was passed:

**Motion: That the WECHU Board of Health support the letter from Simcoe-Muskoka Public Health to the Hon. Christine Elliott in response to the Opioid Crisis province-wide and urges the following:**

1. Create a multisector task force to guide the development of a robust provincial opioid response plan that will ensure necessary resourcing, policy change, and health and social system coordination.
2. Expand access to evidence informed harm reduction programs and practices including lifting the provincial cap of 21 Consumption and Treatment Service (CTS) Sites, funding Urgent Public Health Needs Sites (UPHNS) and scaling up safer opioid supply options.
3. Explore revisions to the current CTS model to address the growing trends of opioid poisoning amongst those who are using inhalation methods.
4. Expand access to opioid agonist therapy for opioid use disorder through a range of settings (e.g. mobile outreach, primary care, emergency departments), and a variety of medication options.

5. Provide a long-term financial commitment to create more affordable and supportive housing for people in need, including people with substance use disorders.
6. Address the structural stigma and harms that discriminate against people who use drugs, through provincial support and advocacy to the Federal government to decriminalize personal use and possession of substances and ensure increased investments in health and social services at all levels.
7. Increase investments in evidence-informed substance use prevention and mental health promotion initiatives that provide foundational support for the health, safety and well-being of individuals, families, and neighbourhoods, beginning for early childhood.
8. Fund additional and dedicated positions for health units to support the coordination and leadership of local opioid and substance strategies.

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit fully supports the above recommendation, and thanks you for your consideration for expanding these provisions to all public health unit regions.

Sincerely,



Gary McNamara, Chair  
Windsor-Essex County Board of Health

c: Nicole Dupuis, CEO, WECHU  
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, alPHa  
Michael A. Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Dr. Kieran Moore, CMOH  
MPs and MPPs in Windsor-Essex  
Mayors and Municipal Council Members in Windsor-Essex

<sup>1</sup> Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. Personal communication with the Epidemiology and Evaluation Department. January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Public Health Ontario (PHO). Interactive Opioid Tool – Opioid Related Morbidity and Mortality in the Geographic Area of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. Retrieved from <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/substance-use/interactive-opioid-tool>. Accessed April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022.