

Board Correspondence

November 2022

Date	From	Subject
October 4, 2022	Peterborough Public Health	Ltr to Minister of Health: AMO Submission – <i>Strengthening Public Health in Ontario: Now and for the Future</i>
October 4, 2022	Peterborough Public Health	Ltr to Minister of Health: Niagara Region Public Health – Paid Sick Leave
October 18, 2022	aIPHa	October 2022 InfoBreak
October 28, 2022	Windsor-Essex County Health Unit	Ltr and report to Minister of Health/Deputy Premier: <i>Inclusion of Language Interpretation and Translation Services to the Healthy Smiles Ontario Fee Guide</i>
November 2, 2022	aIPHa	<p>The province has launched new mental health and addictions resources, including the <i>Breaking Free</i> Program.</p> <p>Mental health resources can be found here: https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-mental-health-support</p> <p>The Breaking Free Program can be found here: https://www.breakingfreeonline.ca/</p>

October 4, 2022

Hon. Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
Government of Ontario
sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Jones,

Re: AMO Submission - Strengthening Public Health In Ontario: Now and For the Future

At its meeting on September 14, 2022, the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health (PPH) received and endorsed the submission from the Association of Municipalities to the Ministry of Health, dated August 26, 2022, entitled Strengthening Public Health In Ontario: Now and For the Future.

Peterborough Public Health supports the recommendations outlined in the submission which include:

- The government must not make significant structural changes to public health during the COVID-19 pandemic, but rather promote stability in the system.
- The government must establish an independent inquiry as soon as possible to determine the lessons learned from COVID-19, at the local and provincial levels, and resume consultations, once the pandemic waves subside, about how to appropriately modernize and strengthen public health in Ontario.
- The government must immediately act to address the full scope of health human resource challenges with a strategy for the public health and the health care systems.
- The government must provide mitigation funding in 2022 to offset the financial impact to municipal governments from the cost-sharing changes in 2019 for 2020 and reverse the decision to restore the cost-share arrangement that existed prior to 2020. Further, the Health Protection and Promotion Act must be amended to enshrine the appropriate cost-sharing arrangement in legislation, rather than as a matter of provincial policy.
- The government must continue funding COVID-19 costs, including vaccine roll-out, and incorporate as a distinct line item in ongoing base budgets for as long as there is a pandemic and epidemic situation that requires prevention and containment activities.
- The government must provide new funding, starting in 2022, as required to address the backlog of non-pandemic related public health services.

These recommendations complement those recently supported by the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA) which call for a continuation of the consultation process on the future of the public health system, as well as outline principles ALPHA sees as critical to proceeding with changes to the public health system.

Local public health collaboration with the Province, municipalities, First Nations, and other partners has been the backbone of Ontario's successful response to the pandemic. Continuing this collaboration, while stabilizing and strengthening the public health system and structures, is essential to the health and economic recovery of the Province, our communities and residents.

Respectfully,

Original signed by

Mayor Andy Mitchell
Chair, Board of Health

/ag

cc: Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Local MPPs
Local Councils
Ontario Boards of Health

October 4, 2022

Hon. Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
Government of Ontario
sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Hon. Monte McNaughton
Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
Government of Ontario
Minister.MLTSD@ontario.ca

Hon. Victor Fedeli
Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
MEDJCT.Minister@ontario.ca

Dear Honourable Ministers:

Re: Niagara Region Public Health – Paid Sick Leave

At its meeting on September 14, 2022, the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health (PPH) considered correspondence from Niagara Region Public Health and passed the following motion:

That the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health:

- *receive the letter dated July 19, 2022 from Niagara Region Public Health (NRPH) for information;*
- *endorse the position from NRPH, and the supporting report "A Renewed Call for Paid Sick Leave in Ontario" from NRPH dated June 14, 2022, less the request to extend the provincial three paid sick days benefit (as that was recently extended by the province), given that PPH identifies that providing employees with paid sick days is one strategy to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in our community;*
- *commits to working internally on an on-going basis to actively promote the health and economic benefits of paid sick day benefits to employers; and,*
- *communicate this support by writing to the Minister of Health and Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development and Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, with copies to the Association of Municipalities Ontario, the Ontario Public Health Association, local MPs and MPPs, and Ontario Boards of Health.*

PPH has a long supported healthy workplaces with advocacy focusing on, amongst other issues, paid sick days for all working Ontarians. In February 2021, the Board of Health wrote to the Ministers of Health and Labour, Training and Skills Development to advocate for paid sick leave in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and on a sustained basis for public health protection.

Providing paid sick days for employees reduces the transmission of COVID-19 as noted in Ontario Science Table research that stated “enabling employers to provide paid sick leave to employees during the pandemic ensures workplace safety, and protection of the public.”¹ University of Toronto research also identified that “there is evidence that paid sick leave protects workers from infectious risk exposures in workplaces, enables workers who currently cannot comply with quarantine and isolation measures, and mitigates the disproportionate effect of such measures on workers who cannot work from home.”²

The Board of Health supports the need to provide paid sick leave, a measure that will significantly assist in our health promotion and prevention mandate. We urge the Provincial government to examine models to introduce and fund this important initiative.

Respectfully,

Original signed by

Mayor Andy Mitchell
Chair, Board of Health

/ag
Encl.

cc: Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Public Health Association
Local MPs and MPPs
Ontario Boards of Health

¹ Thompson, Alison, Stall NM, Born KB, et al. Benefits of paid sick leave during the COVID-19 pandemic. Science Briefs of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table. 2021;2(25).

² Joint Centre for Bioethics, University of Toronto. (2021). Ethics of Paid Sick Leave for the COVID-19 Pandemic. Retrieved August 18, 2022 from <https://jcb.utoronto.ca/ethics-of-paid-sick-leave-for-the-covid-19-pandemic/>.



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July 19, 2022

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

The Honourable Monte McNaughton
Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training
and Skills Development
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Ministers Jones and McNaughton,

First, let me congratulate you on behalf of Niagara Region Council and all Niagara residents for your reappointments to Cabinet. We look forward to working with you over the next four years and seeing our province benefit from your sage leadership.

On behalf of Niagara Region's Board of Health, I write today to you on the matter of employer-paid sick days in Ontario. Specifically, on June 23, 2022, our Board of Health passed a motion requesting that:

1. The Government of Ontario extend the currently temporary three paid sick days in the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA) set to expire July 31, 2022.
2. The Government of Ontario engage in consultation with local municipalities, employers, and broader communities regarding making permanent the three paid sick days, and increasing the number of paid sick days to be in line with the recommendations for adequate sick leave policies; this consultation should seek to understand the challenges to legislating these sick day policies, and identify the supports necessary to enable increasing the number of sick days and making them permanent.
3. The Government of Ontario review the impacts of the amendments to the Canada Labour Code that provided 10 paid sick days for all federal employees across the country.

A copy of our Public Health Department's report (PHD 11-2022) is enclosed for reference.

Staying home when sick is one of the most effective containment strategies for infectious disease, yet it is a benefit currently more accessible to some workers than others.

Workers without paid sick days are more likely to go to work sick, putting others at risk. Throughout the pandemic workplaces with precarious jobs and lack of paid sick leave have become hotspots for COVID-19 infection transmission, and suffered temporary closures

To: Ministers Jones and McNaughton
Re: A Renewed Call for Paid Sick Leave in Ontario

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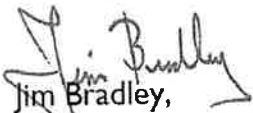
July 19, 2022

during outbreaks. Low-wage racialized workers, who are more likely to be denied paid sick days, have faced higher rates of COVID-19 illness¹ as well as business owners in these areas that, therefore, suffered greater disruption and loss when unable to operate due to staff illness.

Paid sick days should form part of a suite of long-term, sustainable changes to our society to create a post-pandemic "new normal" where COVID-19 is controlled, ensuring the safety of residents and protecting the economy from further disruption. As well, paid sick days would reduce lost productivity and absenteeism due to transmission of other infections, which was estimated to be \$16.6 billion dollars nationally by the Conference Board of Canada in 2012; no doubt it has grown since then."

Paid sick days is a good policy for us to control this pandemic sustainably, make us more resilient to future pandemics, increase productivity, and enhance health equity. We urge your government to extend the current paid sick days policy, and study enhancing it and making it permanent.

Sincerely,



Jim Bradley,
Chair, Board of Health, Niagara Region
Regional Chair, Niagara Region

Enclosure: PHD 11-2022

cc: Premier Doug Ford
Jeff Burch, MPP, Niagara Centre
Wayne Gates, MPP, Niagara Falls
Sam Oosterhoff, MPP, Niagara West
Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens, MPP, St. Catharines
Dean Allison, MP, Niagara West
Vance Badawey, MP, Niagara Centre
Tony Baldinelli, MP, Niagara Falls
Chris Bittle, MP, St. Catharines
All Boards of Health

¹ Decent Work & Health Network. Before it's Too Late: How to close the Paid Sick Day Gap During COVID-19 and Beyond. Published August 2020. (Available from: <https://www.decentworkandhealth.org/beforetoolate>)

² The Conference Board of Canada. Available from (<https://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=5780>). Published September 23, 2013.

Subject: A Renewed Call for Paid Sick Leave in Ontario

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, June 14, 2022

Recommendations

1. That Regional Council **RECOMMEND** that the Government of Ontario extend the currently temporary three paid sick days in the *Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA)* set to expire July 31, 2022;
2. That Regional Council **RECOMMEND** that the Government of Ontario engage in consultation with local municipalities, employers, and broader communities regarding making permanent the three paid sick days, and increasing the number of paid sick days to be in line with recommendations for adequate sick leave policies; this consultation should seek to understand the challenges to legislating these sick day polices, and identify the supports necessary to enable increasing the number of sick days and making them permanent;
3. That Regional Council **RECOMMEND** that the Government of Ontario review the impacts of the amendments to the Canada Labour Code that provided 10 paid sick days for all federal employees across the country; and
4. That Regional Council **DIRECT** the Regional Chair to communicate the above recommendations to the Premier, relevant Members of provincial Cabinet, Niagara's Members of Provincial Parliament, Niagara's Members of Parliament, and all Ontario Boards of Health.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek Council's support for extending beyond July 31, 2022, the currently temporary paid sick days through the *Employment Standards Act*
- Staying home when sick is one of the most effective containment strategies for infectious disease, yet a benefit currently more accessible to some workers than others.¹

¹ Decent Work & Health Network. Before it's Too Late: How to close the Paid Sick Day Gap During COVID-19 and Beyond. Published August 2020. (Available from: <https://www.decentworkandhealth.org/beforetoolate>)

- The gap in access to paid sick days is associated with transmission of infectious illnesses at workplaces² including COVID-19, as many lower paid employees are compelled to work while sick and infectious so as to be able to earn the income they need to live.
- In December 2021, Regional Council endorsed the recommendations in Report PHD 14-2021, expressing support for legislated paid sick days through the *Employment Standards Act*. Similar motions were also passed by Municipalities and Boards of Health across Ontario.
- In December, the Ontario Government extended the temporary three days employer paid sick time to expire on July 31, 2022.

Financial Considerations

As a corporation, Niagara Region has experienced a total cost of \$943,700 (not including Payroll Related costs) for time encoded as Paid Infectious Disease Emergency Leave for the period of April 19, 2021 to April 18, 2022.

Analysis

As stated in Reports PHD 14-2021 and PHD 1-2021, access to employer paid sick leave is an important policy measure for the following reasons¹:

- It is one of the most effective containment strategies for infectious disease;
- Workers without paid sick days are more likely to go to work sick, putting others at risk;
- Parents with paid sick days have been found to be less likely to send sick children to school, preventing outbreaks in schools;
- Workplaces with precarious jobs and lack of paid sick leave have become hotspots for COVID-19 infection transmission, and suffered temporary closures during outbreaks;
- Low-wage and racialized workers, who are more likely to be denied paid sick days, have faced higher rates of COVID-19 illness.

² Drago R, Miller K. Sick at Work: infected employees in the workplace during H1N1 pandemic IWPR.org (2010). (Available from: <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-general/sick-at-work-infected-employees-in-the-workplace-during-the-H1N1-pandemic/>)

The Ontario government's temporary pandemic-specific paid sick days is set to expire July 31, 2022. Since the start of the pandemic there have been many calls on the Ontario government to legislate adequate paid sick days. Calls on the government include, but are not exclusive to

- Bill-7 and Bill-8 introduced to the Ontario legislature in 2021;
- Ontario's Big City Mayors made up of Mayors from 29 cities across Ontario with a population of 100,000 or more;
- The City of St. Catharines as well as other municipalities across Ontario, including both Hamilton and Toronto;
- The Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa);
- The Decent Work and Health Network.

Canada lags behind other nations globally in guaranteeing workers access to adequate paid sick days for short-term illness. On December 17, 2021, the federal government amended the Canada Labour Code to provide up to 10 days of paid sick leave to all federal employees. It was also announced that the federal government will convene the provinces and territories in early 2022, to develop a national action plan to legislate paid sick leave for all workers across the country. Starting January 1, 2022, British Columbia became the first province to expand permanent, employer-paid sick days, with five paid sick days for all full-time and part-time workers.

Paid sick days would form part of a suite of long-term, sustainable changes to our society to create a post-pandemic "new normal" where COVID-19 is controlled, ensuring the safety of residents and protecting the economy from further disruption from the pandemic, as well as lost productivity and absenteeism due to transmission of other infections. Moreover, paid sick days would improve health equity, supporting a Healthy and Vibrant Community.

Alternatives Reviewed

If the temporary paid sick days benefit expires on July 31, 2022, the burden of responsibility will fall to an individual to decide between staying home if they are sick, or going to work in order to get paid. Evidence indicates this results in spread of infectious disease, most pressingly COVID-19, to both customers and co-workers. However, as the pandemic continues, there will be substantial economic losses and inequitable human impacts due to infectious disease such as influenza, and COVID-19 will continue to afflict workplaces further increasing these losses and impacts.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Paid sick days will help to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and other infectious illnesses. Additionally, paid sick days will help to lessen the disproportionate impact COVID-19 is having on workers that do not have access to paid sick leave. This healthy public policy is linked to Council's Healthy and Vibrant Community strategic priority, in particular, the desire to improve health equity.

Other Pertinent Reports

PHD 14-2021 Collaborative Action to Support the Need for Permanent Paid Sick Days
(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=20502>)

PHD 01-2021 Collaborative Acton to Prevent COVID-19 Transmission and Improve Health Equity by Increasing Access to Paid Sick Days
(<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=14323>)

Prepared by:
Lindsay Garofalo
Manager
Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention

Recommended by:
M. Mustafa Hirji, MD, MPH, PCPC
Medical Officer of Health &
Commissioner (Acting)
Public Health and Emergency Services

Submitted by:
Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Dan Schonewille, Health Promoter, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention and Leanne Mannell, Senior HR Business Analyst, Corporate Administration and reviewed by David Lorenzo, Associate Director, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention.

October 28, 2022

The Honorable Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health and Deputy Premier
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Jones:

On October 20, 2022, the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health passed the following Resolution regarding the **Inclusion of Language Interpretation and Translation Services to the Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) Fee Guide**. WECHU's resolution as outlined below recognizes that oral health is important to overall health and well-being. Access to prevention and treatment-based dental care is recognized as a basic human right for children and youth. Given the emergence of remote/virtual translation supports in recent years, this mechanism serves as an effective way to reduce barriers for children and youth access to oral health treatment. The Windsor-Essex County Board of Health therefore recommends the province of Ontario include billing options for translation and interpretation services in the Health Smiles Ontario Fee Guide.

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit Board of Health
RECOMMENDATION/RESOLUTION REPORT
Inclusion of Language Interpretation and Translation Services to the
Healthy Smiles Ontario Fee Guide
October 20, 2022

ISSUE/PURPOSE

The *Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO)* program is a publically-funded dental care program for children and youth 17 years old and under which provides free preventive, routine, and emergency dental services to those who can not otherwise afford it. The *Healthy Smiles Ontario Schedule of Dental Services and Fees for Dentist Providers (HSO Fee Guide)* is an administrative tool distributed to dentists, so that they can provide services to clients in the HSO program and bill for these services.

Although limited English language skills have been identified as a key barrier to preventive dental health care utilization (Mehra, Costanian, Khanna, et al, 2019), language interpretation and translation services are not included in the HSO Fee Guide. Almost a quarter (22%) of Windsor and Essex County's population is comprised of immigrants or refugees ('newcomers') (Statistics Canada, 2016), with 14% of residents most often speaking a language outside of English at home (Statistics Canada, 2021).

The impact of language as a barrier to accessing dental care may be reduced by having access to language interpretation and translation services (Reza, Amin, Srgo et al., 2016). As community dentists are not required to accept HSO as a form of payment, this can already be a significant barrier to accessing services. In Windsor and Essex County, patients have been turned away due to an inability to access translation services. This is understandable, as a patient or guardian needs to be able to provide consent and understand what is involved in treatment. Changes to the funding for HSO, by covering the costs associated with remote interpretation services

Now therefore be it resolved that the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health recommends the province of Ontario include billing options for translation and interpretation services in the *Healthy Smiles Ontario Fee Guide*; and

FURTHER THAT, while there is a variety of modalities of interpretation, it is *remote interpretation services*, accessible 24/7 from a phone, mobile device, or computer, that should be considered as a useful and affordable option; and

FURTHER THAT this resolution be shared with the Ontario Minister of Health, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Association of Public Health Agencies, Ontario Boards of Health, the Essex County Dental Society, the Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry, the Ontario Dental Association and local municipalities and stakeholders.

References

- Amin, M., Elyasi, M., Schroth, R., Azarpazhooh, A., Compton, S., Keenan, L., et al. (2014). Improving the oral health of young children of newcomer families: a forum for community members, researchers, and policy-makers. *Journal of the Canadian Dental Association*. Retrieved from <https://jcda.ca/article/e64>
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- Statistics Canada. (2021). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population. Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Essex&DGUIDlist=2021A00033537&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>
- Windsor Essex County Health Unit. (2018). Oral Health Report 2018 Update. Retrieved from <https://www.wechu.org/resources/oral-health-report-2018>

We would be pleased to discuss this resolution with you and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gary McNamara
Chair, Board of Health



Dr. Kenneth Blanchette
Chief Executive Officer

- c: Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health, Ministry of Health
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ministry of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies – Loretta Ryan
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry
Ontario Boards of Health
WECHU Board of Health
Corporation of the City of Windsor – Clerk's office
Corporation of the County of Essex – Clerk's office