

Board Correspondence

November 2024

Date	From	Subject
September 11, 2024	Public Health Sudbury & Districts	Letter to Minister of Health of Canada: new measures to help prevent harms to youth from nicotine replacement therapies.
October 16, 2024	Public Health Sudbury & Districts	Resolution #48-24: support for Ontario to continue to protect the safety of private drinking water.
October 25, 2024	Northwestern Health Unit	Resolution: support for Ontario to continue to protect the safety of private drinking water.



Public Health
Santé publique
SUDBURY & DISTRICTS

September 11, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honourable Mark Holland
Minister of Health of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Holland:

Re: New measures to help prevent harms to youth from nicotine replacement therapies

Public Health Sudbury & Districts commends the Honourable Mark Holland for the recent Ministerial order to introduce additional safeguarding measures regarding nicotine replacement therapies (NRT). We are deeply appreciative of your commitment to protect youth from targeted advertising, restrict access to nicotine pouches, and prevent further misuse of NRT which are intended to be used by adults trying to quit smoking.

The new measures outlined in your order are a significant step forward in limiting the interest, access, and recreational use of NRT among young people. These measures align closely with our previous [board resolution](#) (#26-24) and [correspondence](#) to your office, wherein we urged Health Canada to address the regulatory gap which allowed the sale of nicotine pouches to youth. We also called for increased regulations to restrict the sale of emerging tobacco and nicotine products to ensure that access remains strongly regulated and kept away from children and youth.

We are pleased to recognize that your Ministerial order has addressed these concerns and demonstrate your continued commitment to public health and the protection of youth. We thank you for your attention to this important issue and look forward to working alongside the Ministry of Health to promote and protect the health of all Canadians.

Sincerely,

Mark Signoretti (Sep 12, 2024 12:49 EDT)

Mark Signoretti, Vice Chair, Board of Health *on behalf of*
René Lapierre, Chair, Board of Health

M. Mustafa Hirji, MD, MPH, FRCPC
Acting Medical Officer of Health and
Chief Executive Officer

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The Honourable Mark Holland
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cc: Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
Honourable Ya'ara Saks, Canada's Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health
Honourable Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Yasir Naqvi, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Honorable Mark Holland
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario
France Gélinas, Member of Provincial Parliament, Nickel Belt
Jamie West, Member of Provincial Parliament, Sudbury
Michael Mantha, Member of Provincial Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin
Viviane Lapointe, Member of Parliament, Sudbury
All Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies



**Public Health
Santé publique**
SUDBURY & DISTRICTS

October 16, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Honourable Minister Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M5G 2C8

Michael Sherar
President and Chief Executive Officer
Public Health Ontario
661 University Avenue, Suite 1701
Toronto, ON M5G 1M1

Dear Minister Jones and Mr. Sherar:

Re: Support for Ontario to continue to protect the safety of private drinking water

At its meeting on September 19, 2024, the Board of Health carried the following resolution [#48-24](#):

WHEREAS twenty-two percent of households within the Public Health Sudbury & Districts service area rely on private drinking water systems; and

WHEREAS it is recommended that drinking water be tested frequently to ensure that it is safe for human consumption; and

WHEREAS exposure to contaminated drinking water can lead to severe gastrointestinal illness and in rare cases may result in death; and

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WHEREAS anyone can become ill from drinking contaminated water; however, children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems are at a higher risk of the harmful effects; and

WHEREAS Public Health Ontario's Well Water Testing program is a publicly-funded service that tests water samples from private drinking water sources for indicators of bacterial contamination; and

WHEREAS testing drinking water quality at private laboratories can be cost prohibitive; and

WHEREAS Public Health Ontario in conjunction with the Ministry of Health has proposed joint modernization plans in 2017 and again in January 2023 that proposed discontinuing well water testing as part of a plan to streamline operations; and

WHEREAS the Auditor General of Ontario in its December 6, 2023 [Value-for-Money Audit: Public Health Ontario](#), called for Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health to move forward with streamlining laboratory operations in consideration of the proposed modernization plans; and

WHEREAS Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health have not yet announced a final plan for streamlining laboratory operations at this time;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts strongly recommends to the Minister of Health and to Public Health Ontario that Ontario's Well Water Testing program be continued in the plan to implement streamlined laboratory operations, and That the Board of Health endorse the resolutions adopted by the Council of the Town of Gore Bay (May 14, 2024), the Council of the Corporation of Northeastern Manitoulin & the Islands (May 23, 2024), and the Council of Central Manitoulin (July 8, 2024) concerning provincial well water testing.

Exposure to contaminated drinking water can cause debilitating gastrointestinal illness, particularly in children, older adults and people with weakened immune systems. Close to one quarter of households within Public Health Sudbury & Districts service area rely on private drinking water systems. For these residents, drinking water testing is the only way to know if their drinking water is safe.

For the well-being of residents, our Board of Health support the continuation of Ontario's publicly funded Well Water Testing program and affirm resolutions adopted by the Council of the Town of Gore Bay (May 14, 2024), the Council of the

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Corporation of Northeastern Manitoulin & the Islands (May 23, 2024), and the Council of Central Manitoulin (July 8, 2024) concerning provincial well water testing.

Maintaining publicly-funded drinking water testing is a needed service that protects many Ontarians utilizing private drinking water systems. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



René Lapierre

Chair, Board of Health

cc: Dr. M. M. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Local Municipalities
Ontario Boards 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
Association of Local Public Health Agencies



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

www.nwhu.on.ca

210 First Street North
Kenora, ON P9N 2K4

October 25, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Honourable Minister Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M5G 2C8

Michael Sherar
President and Chief Executive Officer
Public Health Ontario
661 University Avenue, Suite 1701
Toronto, ON M5G 1M1

Dear Minister Jones and Mr. Sherar:

Re: Support for Ontario to continue to protect the safety of private drinking water

At its meeting on October 25, 2024, the Board of Health for the Northwestern Health Unit passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS many residents in Northwestern Health Unit's service area rely on private drinking water systems such as wells; and

WHEREAS it is recommended that drinking water be tested frequently to ensure it is safe for human consumption; and

WHEREAS exposure to contaminated drinking water can lead to severe gastrointestinal illness, which in rare cases may result in death; and

WHEREAS anyone can become ill from drinking contaminated water; however children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems are at a higher risk of the harmful effects; and

WHEREAS the Public Health Ontario (PHO) Well Water Testing program is a publicly funded service that tests water samples from private drinking water sources for indicators of bacterial contamination; and

WHEREAS testing drinking water quality at private laboratories can be cost prohibitive; and



WHEREAS the Auditor General in its December 6, 2023 Value for Money Audit: Public Health Ontario called for Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health to move forward with streamlining laboratory operations in consideration of the proposed modernization plans; and

WHEREAS Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health have not yet announced a final plan for streamlining laboratory operations at this time;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health for the Northwestern Health Unit strongly recommends to the Minister of Health and to Public Health Ontario that Ontario's Well Water Testing program fully continue as part of the plan to implement streamlined laboratory operations; and

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health endorse the resolutions adopted by the Council of the Town of Gore Bay (May 14, 2024), the Council of Central Manitoulin (July 8, 2024), the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury and Districts (September 19, 2024); and the letter of the Council of Pickle Lake (September 24, 2024);

Exposure to contaminated drinking water can cause debilitating gastrointestinal illness, particularly in children, older adults and people with weakened immune systems. Given our region's geography, and the barriers to extending underground infrastructure to more homes and businesses, such as bedrock, high costs and capacity challenges, free private well water testing remains important for the health of a significant portion of the population in Northwestern Health Unit's catchment area. For these residents, drinking water testing is the only way to know if their drinking water is safe.

For the well-being of residents, our Board of Health support the continuation of Ontario's publicly funded Well Water Testing program and affirm resolutions adopted by Public Health Sudbury and Districts, the Council of the Town of Gore Bay, the Council of the Corporation of Northeastern Manitoulin & the Islands, and the Council of Central Manitoulin concerning provincial well water testing.

Maintaining publicly-funded drinking water testing is a needed service that protects many Ontarians utilizing private drinking water systems. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Douglas Lawrance

Chair, Board of Health for the Northwestern Health Unit

CC: Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health and Deputy Premier
Michael Sherar, President and CEO, Public Health Ontario
Public Health Ontario Board of Directors
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Local Municipalities
Ontario Boards of Health
Hon. Greg Rickford, MPP Kenora – Rainy River
Hon. Kevin Holland, MPP Thunder Bay – Atikokan
Sol Mamakwa, MPP Kiiwetinoong
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Association of Municipalities of Ontario