

January 5, 2024

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

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