

January 31, 2024

Hon. Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
premier@ontario.ca

Hon. Sylvia Jones,
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

The Honourable Michael Parsa
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford, Ministers Jones and Parsa:

Re: Intimate Partner Violence and Public Health Action

At its January 10, 2024 meeting, the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health (PPH) considered and endorsed correspondence from the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (NBPSDHU) regarding the need to advance local and provincial action on monitoring, preventing and reducing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), and adverse events experienced by children with violence or abuse within the family unit.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) includes physical, sexual and/or emotional harm toward a current or former intimate partner. Exposure to IPV is associated with negative impacts to social functioning, mental health and physical health. It is well established through research, that children exposed to violence, either directly or through witnessing interparental violence are at risk of intimate partner violence in adolescence and adulthood. IPV is recognized as an adverse childhood experience (ACE), and ACEs are associated with an increased risk of negative social and health impacts. Research indicates that IPV starts early in the lifespan, thus indicating the need for early prevention efforts and interventions targeting adolescents and young adults. As a local public health agency we are engaged in the work of intimate partner violence prevention and addressing health child growth and development in accordance with the Ontario Public Health Standards: Health Growth and Development and Substance Use and Injury Prevention standards.

At the local level, on November 27, 2023, Peterborough became the 74th municipality in the province of Ontario to declare gender-based violence an epidemic. While this is an important step forward, IPV is generally underreported, therefore advocating for a consistent way of collecting data across the province to inform evidenced-based interventions is urgently required to effectively respond to and prevent IPV.

I trust you will consider our efforts, along with NBPSDHU and the advocacy of others, who continue to voice their support to invest in surveillance and data-informed strategies that will help monitor trends and reduce intimate partner violence, reduce adverse childhood experiences, and increase resilience and protective factors of children and youth.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Councillor Joy Lachica
Chair, Board of Health

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Encl.

cc: Hon. Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General of Ontario
Josée Bégin, Assistant Chief Statistician, Statistics Canada
Local MPPs
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)