

March 21, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

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

Honourable Kamal Khera
Minister of Health of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

**Re: Endorsement of the Walport Report, and for Continued focus
on Public Health Emergency & Pandemic Preparedness**

Dear Honourable Minister Jones and Honourable Minister Khera:

Congratulations once again on your respective reappointments to
Cabinet.

At its meeting on January 16, 2025, the Board of Health for Public
Health Sudbury & Districts carried the following resolution #08-25:

*WHEREAS for the past two decades, there have been Public
Health Emergencies of International Concern approximately
every two years, several of which have impacted Canada;*

*WHEREAS in a world that is increasingly more complex,
interconnected, and uncertain, future public health emergencies
maybe more impactful and difficult to manage;*

*WHEREAS there are opportunities to learn lessons from the
COVID-19 pandemic response, both of around successes and
areas for improvement;*

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WHEREAS The Time to Act is Now: Report of the Expert Panel for the Review of the Federal Approach to Pandemic Science Advice and Research Coordination (aka The Walport Report) is one detailed effort to learn lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic response;

WHEREAS The Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health's 2022 Annual Report Being Ready: Ensuring Public Health Preparedness for Infectious Outbreaks and Pandemics presented a laudable path forward to be better prepare for future public health emergencies;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health endorses the Walport Report and its 12 recommendations;

AND THAT the Board of Health encourages both the Federal government and the government of Ontario to act with deliberate resolve in implementing the Walport Report as well as the 2022 Chief Medical Officer of Health report, respectively.

It has now been 5 years since the COVID-19 pandemic began, and 3 years since the acute emergency response to COVID-19 ended. This has been the most acute health emergency in a generation, and the most dangerous crisis of any sort in our lifetimes. Canada performed admirably through this pandemic, saving millions of lives through science-driven leadership. However, any unprecedented event must have countless lessons with the benefit of hindsight. It is important that we learn these lessons so that we can be as ready as possible for the next health emergency. Indeed, we are already seeing a very concerning surge of avian influenza in North America's animal population and the possibility of it turning into a new pandemic.

Both the Canadian and Ontario governments have produced excellent reports to guide preparation for the next public health emergency:

- [Being Ready: Ensuring Public Health Preparedness for Infectious Outbreaks and Pandemics](#) by the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario in 2023.
- [The Time to Act is Now: Report of the Expert Panel for the Review of the Federal Approach to Science Advice and Research Coordination](#), by Sir Mark Walport for Health Canada in 2024.

Our Board previously endorsed and communicated its support for Ontario's *Being Ready* with our [resolution 19-23 in April 2023](#). We are pleased to now endorse the Walport report as well. Its recommendations are all ones we agree will improve public health. In particular, we are impressed by the Report's recommendations for

building institutional infrastructure for long-term preparedness. We hope the federal government will move swiftly to implement these recommendations.

As a Board of Health, we are concerned that as we get farther away from the COVID-19 pandemic, the resolve to implement improvements to be better prepared for the future will wane. Indeed, we worry that momentum has already been lost. We note that Ontario's report committed to "regularly assess and report on the public health sector's progress in sustaining, strengthening, and developing its capacity to be ready for the next outbreak or pandemic". No such report on progress has yet been produced after almost 2 years.

We commend both your governments for producing excellent and laudable reports for future public health emergency and pandemic preparedness. And we implore both your governments to recommit to implementing these reports. As Avian influenza and other public health threats continue to arise, the work your governments have outlined in these two reports is absolutely necessary to advance.

Our Board and the staff of our agency stand ready to help your governments in any way that we can as you pursue implementation of these reports.

Sincerely,



Mark Signoretti
Chair, Board of Health

cc: Dr. M. M. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer
Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario
Dr. Kate Bingham, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario
Viviane Lapointe, Local Member of Parliament, Sudbury
Marc Serré, Local Member of Parliament, Nickel Belt
Carol Hugues, Local Member of Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing
France Gélinas, Local Member of Provincial Parliament, Nickel Belt
Jamie West, Local Member of Provincial Parliament, Sudbury
Bill Rosenberg, Local Member of Provincial Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin
Ontario Boards of Health