



Sudbury & District

Health Unit

Service de
santé publique

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June 15, 2004

Via Electronic Mail

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier:

**RE: Inclusive Mandate for the Proposed New Ontario Health
Protection and Promotion Agency**

Please be advised that at its May 20, 2004 meeting, the Sudbury & District Board of Health reviewed the key recommendations addressed in the Walker Report, passed the following motion #52-04, and is seeking your urgent attention to this matter:

WHEREAS in response to the SARS crisis, two recent Ontario reports, The SARS Commission Interim Report – SARS and Public Health in Ontario (Campbell Interim Report) and For the Public's Health: A Plan of Action (Walker Report) both recommended major overhauls of the Ontario public health system; and

WHEREAS both reports warn of the risk of "tinkering" with the system and stress the need for political will to inject the necessary resources for a reformed public health system; and

WHEREAS the Walker report recommends that an Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Agency be established with a broad mandate that includes a central laboratory, capacity to address communicable disease and infection control, emergency preparedness, health promotion and injury prevention, as well as research/knowledge transfer, epidemiology and surveillance, library services and communications; and

WHEREAS despite this broad mandate, the Agency will not initially include health promotion or injury prevention as it is recommended that the Agency bring forward a work plan and implementation framework by year 3 outlining the manner and timing for expanded health promotion capacity and functions; and

WHEREAS there is with no recommendation in the Walker report concerning family health including child health; and

WHEREAS there is realistic concern that early inattention to health promotion, injury prevention and family health will result in the future under-investment in these core functions and in a destructive hierarchy

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of public health programs and services; and

WHEREAS the societal and health costs of chronic disease and unhealthy child development are well documented and surpass those of infectious diseases; and

WHEREAS the core mandate of an effective public health system includes chronic disease and injury prevention as well as child and reproductive health;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Sudbury & District Board of Health assert to the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care that the core public health functions of health promotion, injury prevention and family health be immediately included in the mandate of the new Health Protection and Promotion Agency and that to not do so will risk a fragmented and less effective public health system; and

FURTHERMORE that copies of this motion be forwarded to the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, the Ontario Public Health Association, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies and all Ontario health units for their information and support.

The recommendations of the provincial report are expected to have a significant impact on public health. However these recommendations do not include the immediate inclusion of health promotion, injury prevention and family health as core functions of the new Health Protection and Promotion Agency.

The Sudbury & District Board of Health is seeking your attention to this urgent matter and strongly recommends the immediate inclusion of these core public health functions in the mandate of the new Health Protection and Promotion Agency.

Yours sincerely,

Original signed by

Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

mt

c: Dr. S. Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister
Ontario Public Health Association
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health