



Sudbury & District

**Health Unit**

Service de  
santé publique

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Healthy  
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*Visez Santé  
dès  
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May 25, 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: Northern Health Issues in Ontario Public Health Renewal**

At its May 20, 2004 meeting, the Board of Health considered the recommendations in the recently released "Walker Report". The following motion #53-04 was passed and identifies the main areas in which northern uniqueness must inform public health decision-making:

***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) recommend major overhauls of the Ontario public health system; and***

***WHEREAS the reports recommend the restructuring of the present municipal-provincial cost-sharing agreement to reflect between 75-100% provincial funding of public health; and***

***WHEREAS, recommendation 22 of the Walker Report is to identify key operational, systemic and governance barriers that contribute to or may impede the successful functioning of local health units; and***

***WHEREAS northern Ontario faces unique barriers and challenges affecting the successful functioning of northern health units including: vast geographic areas with low population densities, funding constraints related to the service provision to citizens living in unincorporated areas, health professional recruitment and retention challenges, access to ongoing education and training, underlying health status and socio-economic disparities, limited access to primary care services; and***

***WHEREAS the Community Reinvestment Fund and the Unorganized Territories grant uniquely impact the north and affect the ability of northern health units to successfully function;***

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Sudbury & District Board of Health write to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to ensure that they consider unique northern***

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***barriers and challenges when they review the structure and amount of public health funding to northern health units; and***

***FURTHERMORE that a copy of the letter be forwarded to the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies and all Ontario health units for their information and support.***

It is our understanding that the May 18, 2004 budget announcement means a greater investment in public health. The announced change in funding formula will do little if it is not accompanied by a significant increase in the size of the public health envelope. When the Community Reinvestment Fund is factored in, the funding formula is already approximately 80% provincial/20% municipal. When northern health and service delivery challenges and the frozen unincorporated/unorganized territories grant are factored in, there is already a large deficit in northern public health funding.

These are complex issues affecting public health in all of northern Ontario. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you further so that we can best work together to support health in the north.

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  
Association of Municipalities of Ontario  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Ontario Boards of Health