

Hon. Sandra Pupatello  
Minister of Community & Social Services  
Main Legislative Building  
Room 357  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A4

23/03/04

Honourable Minister,

**Re. Resolution A01-19, Ontario Works and Adequate Nutrition**

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On behalf of member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa), I am writing today to reintroduce alPHa's Resolution calling to ensure that the Basic Allowance portion of Ontario Works Financial Assistance allows for adequate nutrition (attached).

This Resolution was made during the previous government, along with another calling for protection of families and children under its zero-tolerance policy for welfare fraud leading to lifetime bans. On this subject, we would like to congratulate you and your government for going even farther by putting an end to this regressive and harmful policy. We hope that similar positive action can be taken to ensure that the basic needs of those receiving legitimate social assistance are met.

At the time of the original Resolution, the average cost of feeding a family of four had risen by more than 10%, and social assistance rates had decreased significantly. In addition, shelter costs continue to rise. This set of circumstances has a particular impact on Ontario residents receiving social assistance, who may still be forced to choose between buying food and paying rent.

Optimal health is impossible to achieve if access to sufficient, safe, nutritious and personally acceptable food is limited. While local boards of health continue to work with community agencies to promote and improve such access, the information gathered under the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) Monitoring the Cost of a Nutritious Food Basket Protocol should be used by decision-makers in all levels of government for the development of policy strategies to ensure food security for all Ontarians. We hope that your Ministry will adopt new policies to provide families receiving social assistance with the resources needed to ensure proper nutrition.

Sincerely,



Andrew Papadopoulos, BAsC, MBA  
Executive Director

**Copy:** Dr. Sheela Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
**Encl.**

*As the provincial organization representing public health, alPHa provides leadership and expertise on public health management issues. Its members include medical officers of health, board of health members and senior managers in public health disciplines including inspection, epidemiology, nursing, dentistry, nutrition, health promotion and business administration.*

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**2001 alPHa RESOLUTION NO. A01-19**

**TITLE: Ontario Works Allowances and Adequate Nutrition**

**SPONSOR: Regional Municipality of Durham**

**WHEREAS** boards of health are required to monitor the cost of a nutritious food basket according to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) Monitoring the Cost of a Nutritious Food Basket Protocol; and

**WHEREAS** boards of health submit the cost of a nutritious food basket to the MOHLTC annually; and

**WHEREAS** in 1995, Ontario's social assistance allowances were reduced by over 21%; and

**WHEREAS** these allowances have not been increased since then despite inflation ranging from 0.9% to 2.9% between 1995 and 2000; and

**WHEREAS** the Basic Allowance portion of the Ontario Works Financial Assistance may not pay for adequate nutrition for families after shelter costs are taken into account; and

**WHEREAS** social assistance recipients and their families should be able to meet their basic nutritional needs;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Government of Ontario is urged to review and ensure that the Basic Allowance portion of Ontario Works Financial Assistance allows for adequate nutrition;

**AND FURTHER** that the Premier of Ontario, the Ministers of Community and Social Services and Health and Long-Term Care and the Chief Medical Officer of Health are so advised.

***Status of Resolution:* Endorsed by the alPHa membership June 12, 2001**