

The Honourable Tony Clement
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto ON M7A 2C4

September 8, 2003

Honourable Minister,

RE: Resolutions from alPHa Annual Conference, 2003

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 to introduce the resolutions endorsed this past June by our membership for consideration, information and anticipated action by your Ministry. We would like to call your attention to alPHa Resolutions **A03-1, 2, 6 and 7** for action, and to the remainder for information. Copies of each are included for your convenience.

No. A03-1 Establishment of Health Goals and Objectives for Ontario

The goals and objectives as currently set out within the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines address important public health issues and are valuable measures of progress relating to the health of Ontario citizens. Set by the Ministry of Health, the standards contained therein apply only to the business of Boards of Health. It has become increasingly clear that the achievement of these goals and objectives (both existing and proposed) can only be reached by broader coordination and application across administrative jurisdictions. We are thus urging the government to consider the implementation of a process that will set comprehensive health goals and objectives for the entire province, with complementary standards for all ministries and government-funded agencies.

No. A03-2 Health Care Renewal and Prevention

As the renewal of health care has recently been carefully examined in several processes, the topics of disease prevention and healthy living have been consistently identified as key components of an effective system. Specific recommendations include the pursuit of a National Immunization Strategy and a commitment by all of Canada's Ministers of Health to continue work on the Pan-Canadian Healthy Living strategy. alPHa's members believe strongly in focussing upon prevention strategies and reducing disparities in health service provision as a cornerstone of the health care system as a whole.

No. A03-3 Helicobacter Pylori and Gastric Cancer Prevention

Stomach cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related mortality worldwide; and *H. pylori* has been identified as an associated risk factor. Given the poor prognosis once stomach cancer has been diagnosed, and given the prevalence of *H. pylori* (which can be easily detected through non-invasive tests and whose effective treatment is known), alPHa is urging the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) and Ontario Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation to consider funding a project to evaluate the merits of a screening and treatment protocol.

No. A03-4 Hot Tap Water Burn Injuries Prevention

At present, there are initiatives underway for the renewal of National Building and Fire Codes as well as of the Ontario Building Code to introduce objective-based requirements. alPHA is thus urging that the National Building and Fire Codes and the Ontario Building Codes, respectively, be amended such that maximum hot tap water temperature in the home is reduced from 60°C to 49°C. This rule already applies to certain categories of special care homes to prevent scalding injuries, and we believe that this protection should be extended to all residences.

No. A03-5 Monitoring of Human Exposure to Chemicals

Exposure to chemicals is one of the most significant ongoing debates in environmental health. The public is very concerned about the toxicological effects of exposure to certain chemicals, especially where there are conflicting reports from various “experts” on the subject. Pesticides used for weed control and for the control of mosquitoes are two current examples among many of such concern. In the United States, there is already a project underway that measures and reports on human exposure to environmental contaminants. We believe that it would be extremely valuable for a similar project to be undertaken in Canada, the purposes of which are outlined in the attached resolution. This would contribute strongly to an evidence-based approach to interventions designed to minimize the negative health consequences of such exposures.

No. A03-6 Improving Relations with Provincial Public Health Authorities

As we have seen with the recent public health crises in Ontario, the need for better collaboration and communications between public health stakeholders has never before been greater. The SARS outbreak in Toronto posed unprecedented challenges to both local and provincial health authorities and required joint planning and implementation, which did not always occur. The membership, therefore, respectfully requests that in the future the Public Health Division makes a greater effort to include alPHA in discussions of provincial public health policy and practices. Given the shared public health goals between this organization and the Ministry, and our respective roles within the public health sector, closer collaboration and improved communications between the two organizations makes good sense.

No. A03-7 Compensation for West Nile Virus Disease

It has become evident over the past few years that West Nile Virus has likely become an endemic agent of disease in North America. Despite the best control efforts, there will continue to be infections that will result in serious impact on health, including some cases of significant long-term disability. It is conceivable that there will be litigation to establish fault and claim compensation that will in turn needlessly redirect public resources. alPHA is thus petitioning the Province of Ontario to establish a no-fault compensation plan for individuals who develop significant and long-term disability from West Nile virus disease.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues. We look forward to a reply at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Andrew Papadopoulos, BAsC, MBA
Executive Director

cc. Dr. Colin D’Cunha, Director, Public Health Branch and Chief Medical Officer of Health
Hon. Ernie Eves, Premier of Ontario (Resolution A03-1; A03-2; A03-7)
Hon. Jean Chretien, Prime Minister of Canada (Resolution A03-2)
Hon. Anne McLellan, MP, Minister of Health (Resolution A03-2; A03-3; A03-4; A03-5)
Hon. Jim Flaherty, Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation (Resolution A03-3)
Alan Bernstein, OC, PhD, FRSC, President, CIHR (Resolution A03-3)
Hon. Chris Hodgson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Resolution A03-4)
Hon. Allan Rock, MP, Minister of Industry (Resolution A03-4)
Hon. David Collenette, MP, Minister of Transport (Resolution A03-4)

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