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Ontario

Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care

Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée

Chief Medical Officer of Health and
Assistant Deputy Minister

Médecin hygiéniste en chef et
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SEP 10 2004

RECEIVED
SEP 17 2004
ALPHA

Ms. Susan Lee
Interim Executive Director
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA)
425 University Avenue, Suite 502
Toronto ON M5G 1T6

Dear Ms. ^{Susan,} Lee:

RE: Resolutions from ALPHA Annual Conference, 2004

Thank you for your letter of July 21, 2004 to the Honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, concerning the resolutions adopted by the ALPHA membership at the 2004 Annual Conference, June 13 – 15, 2004.

Please find attached the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) response to ALPHA Resolutions A04-2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9.

We are appreciative of the role played by ALPHA in supporting boards of health and advocating on behalf of a public health agenda and we thank you for bringing public health issues to the Minister's attention.

Yours truly,

Dr. Sheela V. Basrur
Chief Medical Officer of Health and
Assistant Deputy Minister

Attachment

- c: Ms. Ruth Hawkins, Executive Director, Public Health Division
- Dr. Robert Jin, Acting Director, Public Health Branch
- Ms. Helga Loechel, Director, Early Years and Healthy Child Development Branch, Ministry of Children and Youth Services

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE
RESPONSES TO 2004 aLPHa RESOLUTIONS

No. A04-2 "Ontario Expert Panel on SARS and Infectious Diseases"

Resolution:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHa) urges the Government of Ontario to strike an Expert Advisory Group, including representation from aLPHa and its Council of Medical Officers of Health, to oversee and guide the implementation of these recommendations;

AND FURTHER that aLPHa urges the Government of Ontario to direct the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to report to the legislature at least annually on the progress of the implementation.

MOHLTC Response:

On June 22, 2004, Operation Health Protection was released providing a clear timeframe for concrete action on a wide range of issues identified in the Walker Report. The Ministry is committed to ensuring ongoing consultation and input from both medical officers of health and aLPHa and will be bringing forward approaches for discussion in the near future.

No. A04-4 "Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines"

No. A04-5 "Continual Revision of General and Program Standards"

Resolution (A04-4):

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that aLPHa urges the Government of Ontario, as an interim step, to finalize the revised chronic disease prevention, early detection of cancer, injury prevention and substance abuse prevention, reproductive health, child health and safe water program standards.

Resolution (A04-5):

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHa) urges the Government of Ontario to establish an inclusive, rapid process for continually reviewing, revising, approving and modernizing the general and program standards of the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines;

AND FURTHER that aLPHa urges the Government of Ontario to initiate and rapidly finalize the review and revision of the Control of Infectious Diseases and Infection Control program standards, particularly in the wake of SARS.

MOHLTC Response:

On June 22, 2004, the Ontario government announced a three-year action plan – Operation Health Protection – for the revitalization of Ontario's public health system.

The Plan gives the province's public health system a new mandate, new leadership, accountability, and multi-year funding.

The Ministry is taking steps to begin the renewal process. As announced, the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines will be reviewed over the next 18 months to ensure that they are consistent with the needs, best practices, and lessons learned from Ontario's experience with Walkerton, the West Nile virus, and SARS. In addition, this year the Ministry will undertake a capacity review of local Public Health Units to help develop long-term strategies for the provision of public health programs and services.

No. A04-6 "Childhood Obesity"

Resolution:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA) urges the Chief Medical Officer of Health to review and make recommendations on childhood obesity in the next annual report;

AND FURTHER that ALPHA urges the Government of Ontario to strike an expert panel to study childhood obesity and to recommend an Ontario obesity strategy.

MOHLTC Response:

The MOHLTC shares your concern about obesity, particularly among children, and its associated health risks and there is a strong desire for our government to take action on this important health issue. The Ministry believes in encouraging people to make healthy choices in their lives.

The Ministry already supports a number of initiatives that promote healthy eating and physical activity, through programs and initiatives provided through local public health units and with community partners. We would like to do even more to encourage people to make the choices now that will protect their health into the future.

No. A04-8 "Preschool Speech, Language and Audiology Funding"

Resolution:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA) request an increase in the annual funding for the preschool speech and language, audiology and infant hearing programs by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care so as to maintain the existing levels of service provided by health units, and to allow enhanced service to residents of First Nation communities.

MOHLTC Response:

As of April 1, 2004, preschool speech and language, audiology and infant hearing programs have been transferred to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. As such, your letter is being forwarded to the attention of Ms. Helga Loechel, Director,

Early Years and Healthy Child Development Branch, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, for a response.

No. A04-9 “Public Health Impact Statement Requirements”

Resolution:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Ontario immediately require that public health impact analysis statements be a component of Cabinet Submissions prepared by any Ministry of Government.

MOHLTC Response:

The MOHLTC welcomes the proposal that public health impact analysis statements be included in all Cabinet submissions. Ministry staff will examine the feasibility of this and may be in contact further regarding this matter.