

2/15/2006

Hon. Tony Clement , Minister of Health
Minister's Office - Health Canada
Brooke Claxton Building, Tunney's Pasture
Postal Locator: 0906C
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1A 0K9

Honourable Minister,

Re. alPHa Resolution A05-5, Access to Dental Care

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 introduce alPHa's resolution on Access to Dental Care (A05-5, attached), supporting a similar motion carried by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in May 2005 (also attached).

As public health professionals, our members' primary interest lies in preventive means of reducing disease. Oral health is an essential component of overall health, and the strategies for maintaining it are well developed. We are urging the Government of Canada, along with its provincial and territorial partners to explore a national Oral Health Strategy that will provide universal access to preventive and treatment services for all Canadians.

We look forward to a reply at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,



Linda Stewart,
Executive Director

Copy: Dr. Sheela Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health – Ontario
Dr. David Butler-Jones, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada
Hon. George Smitherman, Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hon. Jim Watson, Ontario Minister of Health Promotion
James Knight - Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Bonnie Jeffrey, President, Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry

Encl.

2005 alpha Resolution A05-5

TITLE **Access to Dental Care**

SPONSOR: Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry

WHEREAS dental care is not an included service under the publicly funded medical care system and must be financed by individual Canadians;

WHEREAS low income (lower socio economic) individuals tend to suffer higher rates of dental disease and decay;

WHEREAS the current system of publicly funded dental programs varies from community to community, but is very limited for low income families and adults who do not typically have access to private dental benefits packages;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alpha) supports the action of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and calls on the Government of Canada, in consultation with Provincial, Territorial and Local Governments, to develop a comprehensive National Oral Health Strategy that would have, as its goal, providing universal access of both preventive and treatment services to all Canadians.

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS CONSIDERED AT THE 68TH FCM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SOC05.2.05

ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE: A NATIONAL DENTAL CARE STRATEGY

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) call on the Government of Canada to develop a comprehensive National Oral Health Strategy that would have as its goal, providing universal access of both preventive and treatment services to all Canadians; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government of Canada, in developing a comprehensive, universal, national dental strategy be asked to evaluate the following four key areas of possible action, and to assess the effectiveness of each in either increasing the range of specific dental services or reducing the portion of the population excluded from access to dental care:

- a) increase the level of service to ensure that all Canadians have access to a basic level of dental care;
- b) change the eligibility for access into the programs so that more residents could access the current level of dental services;
- c) examine access to care and the factors leading to under utilization of existing programs.

Increase the participation of those who currently have access to the programs from the estimated 20-25% utilization; and

d) continue to develop programs that target adults or children that have a direct impact on the other determinants of health and indirectly support oral health.

- City of Ottawa, Ontario
- City of Kingston, Ontario

