

9/19/2006

Hon. Donna Cansfield
Minister of Transportation
Ferguson Block
3rd Flr
77 Wellesley St W
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8

Honourable Minister,

Re. 2006 alPHa Resolutions on Motorized Vehicle Safety

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 Resolutions on the Highway Traffic Act and All Terrain Vehicle Safety (A06-1 and A06-2, attached) passed at alPHa's Annual General Meeting in June 2006.

Our members are responsible for providing public health programs and services in areas specified in the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines. The Injury Prevention program standards include as a goal the reduction of disability, morbidity and mortality caused by motorized vehicles. Our members work with police forces and community groups to support policies and educate the public to promote safety and prevent injuries caused by motor vehicles.

Re. alPHa Resolution A06-1, Highway Traffic Act

There have recently been concerns expressed about a significant gap in Ontario's Highway Traffic Act, which requires wearing seatbelts only by passengers occupying seats for which they are provided, without limiting the number of passengers permitted to ride in the vehicle. The Highway Traffic Act thus allows the obviously unsafe situation where one or more passengers are not required to be restrained in overloaded vehicles. This situation is known to have resulted directly in the November 2005 death of a 13 year old boy in Ottawa. We are thus urging that Section 106 of the Act be immediately amended to restrict the number of passengers transported by a motor vehicle to the number of available seatbelts

Re. alPHa Resolution A06-2 All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety

According to information from the Canada Safety Council, there has been significant growth in ATV sales since the mid-90s along with a steady and significant rise in related injuries. The Canadian Institute for Health Information reported a 50% rise in ATV-related hospitalizations in a five-year period beginning in 1996, with 36% of admissions being between the age of 5 and 19 years. We are therefore urging that the Government of Ontario to strike a multi-stakeholder ATV

Task Group to develop a comprehensive, evidence-based approach, including amendments to the *Off-Road Vehicles Act*, to promote ATV safety and prevent ATV injuries, particularly in children.

We look forward to a reply at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Linda Stewart,
Executive Director

Copy: Dr. Sheela Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Hon. Mary Anne Chambers, Minister of Children and Youth Services,
Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario
Hon. George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hon. Jim Watson, Minister of Health Promotion
Dean Wilson, President Canada Safety Council

Encl.

alPHa Resolution A06-1

TITLE: Highway Traffic Act

SPONSOR: Durham Regional Council

WHEREAS Ontario's *Highway Traffic Act* does not restrict the number of passengers who can ride in a motor vehicle such that it equals the number of available seatbelts; and

WHEREAS the Canada Safety Council advocates that motor vehicle regulations be amended to limit the number of passengers to the number of available seatbelts; and

WHEREAS in 2003, Transport Canada reported that failure to wear a seatbelt resulted in 37% of passengers being fatally injured and 20% being seriously injured; and

WHEREAS Transport Canada also reported that only 86% of all vehicle occupants wore seatbelts in contrast to Canada's National Road Safety Target for seatbelt use of 95% by 2010; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Minister of Transportation be urged to amend the *Highway Traffic Act* such that the number of passengers transported by a motor vehicle is restricted to equal the number of available seatbelts with the exception of those vehicles that are exempted according to the *Highway Traffic Act*; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Premier of Ontario, Ministers of Children and Youth Services, Health and Long-Term Care, and Health Promotion; Chief Medical Officer of Health be so advised.

alPHa Resolution A06-2

TITLE: All Terrain Vehicle Safety

SPONSOR: Durham Regional Council

WHEREAS the current *Off-Road Vehicle Act* states that no owner of an off-road vehicle shall permit a child under the age of 12 years to drive such a vehicle except when the child is driving the vehicle on land occupied by the vehicle owner or under the close supervision of an adult; and

WHEREAS retail sales of off-road or all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) in Ontario have increased dramatically from 5,704 in 1997 to 21,188 in 2004; and

WHEREAS ATV-related injuries are the only type of injury on the rise while other types of injuries are decreasing; and

WHEREAS children less than 16 years of age account for almost one-third of ATV injury-related hospital emergency visits; 30% or more of ATV injury hospitalizations and almost half of all ATV-related deaths; and

WHEREAS ATVs range in size from 50cc to 700cc engines and weigh up to 273 kg (600 lb.) with speed capabilities as fast as 75 mph; and

WHEREAS ATV steering is complex and according to the Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS), children and young adolescents lack the knowledge, physical size and strength, and cognitive and motor skills to operate ATVs safely; and

WHEREAS the CPS has developed a set of evidence-based recommendations aimed to improve ATV safety for children; and

WHEREAS the Government of New Brunswick, for example, struck a multi-stakeholder ATV task force that developed a set of comprehensive recommendations in the following areas: public safety; environmental protection; enforcement; legislation; trail networking; education and funding;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Ontario be urged to strike a multi-stakeholder ATV Task Group to develop a comprehensive, evidence-based approach, including amendments to the *Off-Road Vehicles Act*, to promote ATV safety and prevent ATV injuries, particularly in children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Premier of Ontario, Ministers of Children and Youth Services, Health and Long-Term Care, Health Promotion and Transportation and Chief Medical Officer of Health be so advised.