

Hon. George Smitherman
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Main Legislative Building
Room 447
Toronto, ON M7A 1A4

11/12/2007

Honourable Minister,

Re. Resolutions passed at the 2007 alPHa Annual General Meeting

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 most recent resolutions for anticipated follow-up and action by your Ministry. Each is briefly described below and attached.

A07-5: Amendments of the Immunization of School Pupils Act

This resolution simply asks for the inclusion of Pertussis as a Designated Disease under Regulation 645 of the Immunization of School Pupils Act to increase health unit access to immunization histories for epidemiological information.

A07-6: Advocate for a Provincial Strategy to Address Substance Use

Ontario's public health agencies have a mandate in several areas to address substance use and abuse in order to reduce adverse health outcomes, including chronic and communicable diseases and injuries. These would be more effective as part of a comprehensive provincial strategy that we believe would be well served in collaboration with the Ontario Health Education and Enforcement (HEP) initiative, which focuses on the four components of prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement.

A07-7: Request for Public Funding for Human Papillomavirus Vaccine

As this resolution was passed prior to the recent launch of Ontario's HPV vaccination program, we would like to reiterate our congratulations to the Ontario Government for implementing this important public health initiative. We hope that the program will be a permanent part of the publicly-funded vaccine schedule and that it will be expanded to reflect the NACI recommendations as described in the resolution.

A07-8: Ontario Congenital Anomalies Surveillance System

Surveillance is critical to understanding the causes of disease and their prevention. The establishment of a Congenital Anomalies Surveillance System within the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion would contribute to the knowledge based required to inform a number of public health interventions to prevent them.

A07-10: Publicly Funded Dental Program to Assist Financially Disadvantaged Ontarians

alPHa is calling on the Government of Ontario to honour its election campaign pledge to implement a publicly-funded dental program for financially disadvantaged Ontarians. Poor oral health has significant impacts on health and well being for a range of reasons, and low income Ontarians face the greatest barriers to accessing preventive and treatment services as long as dental care remains outside of our universal health care system.

A07-11: Children in Need of Treatment (CINOT) Program

alPHa is once again calling for improvements to Ontario's CINOT program, by urging the province to resume 100% funding and to increase reimbursements to practitioners to at least 75% of current Ontario Dental Association fee schedules in order to foster their willingness to participate in the program.

We look forward to speaking with you further about these issues, and as always, look forward to opportunities to assist in addressing them. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Linda Stewart,
Executive Director

Copy: Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health (Acting)

Encl.

alPHa RESOLUTION A07-5

TITLE: **Amendments of the Immunization of School Pupils Act**

SPONSOR: **Perth District Board of Health**

WHEREAS currently, local boards of health are not notified that a child has received an immunization as mandated by legislation, creating delays and challenges in accessing immunization histories for health unit staff at the time of school entry; and

WHEREAS Pertussis persists as a communicable disease, particularly in adolescents and adults, posing a risk to young infants who are not fully protected and who are at increased risk of complications and death if they are exposed, usually through a parent or sibling;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Local Public Health Agencies request that the Minister be requested to amend Regulation 645 of the ISPA to include Pertussis as a designated disease.

alPHa RESOLUTION A07-6

TITLE: Advocate for a Provincial Strategy to Address Substance Use

SPONSOR: Toronto Public Health

WHEREAS the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse estimates that in 2002 the total costs associated with substance use in Canada (all substances including tobacco) were \$39.9 billion, or \$1,267 per capita; and

WHEREAS public health agencies have a direct mandate in several key areas related to the use of alcohol and other drugs, specifically: chronic disease prevention, injury prevention, substance abuse prevention and harm reduction such as needle exchange; and

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario does not have a comprehensive strategy to reduce the harms of alcohol and other drug use; and

WHEREAS the Health Education and Enforcement Partnership (HEP) in Ontario has secured broad sector-wide support to develop a comprehensive provincial drug strategy based on the four components of prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Local Public Health Agencies request that the provincial government develop a comprehensive provincial strategy for alcohol and other drugs based on the four components of prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement, in collaboration with the Ontario Health Education and Enforcement Partnership (HEP) initiative.

alPHa RESOLUTION A07-7

TITLE: Request for Public Funding for Human Papillomavirus Vaccine

SPONSOR: Board of Health, Simcoe Muskoka District Health

WHEREAS the Government of Ontario has publicly funded vaccines against diphtheria, H. influenza b, measles, mumps, pertussis, polio, rubella, hepatitis B, varicella, pneumococcal disease, meningococcal C, and tetanus; and

WHEREAS Health Canada has approved the use of a HPV vaccine for females between the ages of nine and 26; and

WHEREAS the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has recommended the HPV vaccine for females aged nine to 26 years; and

WHEREAS human papillomavirus (HPV) has been directly linked to cervical cancer, the third most common cancer in Canadian women aged 20-49;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) requests the Government of Ontario to include HPV vaccine as a publicly funded immunization for females between the ages of nine and 26 years.

alPHa RESOLUTION A07-8

TITLE: Ontario Congenital Anomalies Surveillance System

SPONSOR: Durham Regional Council

WHEREAS congenital anomalies are a leading cause of infant death and the fifth leading cause of potential life years lost in Canada; and

WHEREAS 2-3% of all newborns in Canada are born with a serious congenital anomaly; and

WHEREAS many congenital anomalies are caused by a combination of genetic and environmental influences with most babies being born to women with no family history and no known risk factors for congenital anomalies; and

WHEREAS some congenital anomalies can be prevented with public health initiatives that promote increased intake of folic acid before and during early pregnancy, and reduced maternal alcohol use, obesity, diabetes and other risk factors; and

WHEREAS surveillance of congenital anomalies is important for understanding causes and preventing cases; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Congenital Anomalies Surveillance System (CCASS) is limited in its effectiveness because it focuses only on infants born with congenital anomalies or those hospitalized in the first 30 days of life (formerly first year of life) and does not capture information about pregnancy terminations prior to 20 gestation; and

WHEREAS Ontario has the essential components of a congenital anomalies surveillance system through the Niday Perinatal System, the Ontario Maternal Multiple Marker Screening Database, the Fetal Alert Network and other data systems; and

WHEREAS the proposed Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion will have the functions of surveillance and epidemiology, research, knowledge exchange, and laboratory services all of which would support the establishment of an Ontario congenital anomalies surveillance system; and

WHEREAS the Surveillance Partnerships Working Group (SPWG) of the CCASN has been newly formed to promote the establishment of congenital anomaly surveillance systems in provinces, such as Ontario, that do not have them; and

WHEREAS boards of health need and would benefit from having access to a single database that combines high quality live birth, stillbirth and prenatal screening data to assess congenital anomaly incidence and prevention programs within their populations;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT alPHa urges the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish an Ontario congenital anomaly surveillance system by working in partnership with the Ontario Ministries of Children and Youth Services, Government Services (Office of the Registrar General) and Health Promotion, and members of SPWG including those from the Niday Perinatal System, the Ontario Maternal Multiple Marker Screening Database, and the Fetal Alert Network;

alpha RESOLUTION A07-10

TITLE: Publicly Funded Dental Program to Assist Financially Disadvantaged Ontarians

SPONSOR: Board of Health for the Hastings and Prince Edward Counties Health Unit

WHEREAS oral health is an important component of general health and impacts upon the cost of the general health care system; and

WHEREAS poor oral health impacts on a child's speech development, ability to thrive and readiness to learn; and

WHEREAS poor oral health can compromise the employability of working-age adults; and

WHEREAS poor oral health compromises the quality of life of seniors; and

WHEREAS there are members of our community who cannot obtain basic dental care because of financial barriers;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care be requested to begin the process of developing a publicly funded dental program that assists Ontarians who face financial barriers in accessing basic dental care.

alPHa RESOLUTION A07-11

TITLE: Children in Need of Treatment (CINOT) Program

SPONSOR: Thunder Bay District Board of Health

WHEREAS the CINOT program exists for children who have no access to dental insurance or any other government program, and for whom the cost of necessary dental treatment would cause financial hardship for the family; and

WHEREAS the Thunder Bay Board of Health and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) recognize the important role that the CINOT program plays in helping vulnerable children access dental care and reducing the depth of child poverty; and

WHEREAS the prevalence of dental disease is not evenly distributed throughout the Province – rural areas, Northern Ontario and communities with large refugee or Aboriginal populations often experience a disproportionate demand for the CINOT program, beyond what can be borne by local resources; and

WHEREAS the demand for the CINOT program in the Thunder Bay District (TBD) is not highly predictable from year to year, yet has grown significantly over the past seven years, with 464 claims in 1999 compared to a high of 815 claims in 2005; and

WHEREAS the CINOT program currently reimburses dentists on average 59% of the Ontario Dental Association (ODA) approved fee schedule, resulting in a financial disincentive for local dentists to participate in the program;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Local Public Health Agencies request that the provincial government resume 100% funding of the CINOT dental treatment program;

AND FURTHER THAT CINOT fees to service providers remain reasonably attractive by increasing them to at least 75% of the ODA approved fee schedule, reviewing them on a regularly scheduled basis and incorporating a ‘cost of living’ increase.

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa), the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Minister of Health Promotion, the Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health, local Members of Provincial Parliament, member municipalities and Ontario Boards of Health for their support and action, and to District dentists.