

12/12/2007

Dr. Terrence Sullivan,  
President and CEO  
Cancer Care Ontario  
620 University Avenue  
Toronto, ON M5G 2L7

Dear Dr. Sullivan,

**Re. Cancer Care Ontario Support for Boards of Health**

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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 calling for CCO's support for local health unit cancer management activities (A07-9, attached).

We have been encouraged by the recent and long-overdue emphasis on prevention of disease as an integral part of the continuum of health, and welcome opportunities to collaborate with partners in the treatment sector to strengthen it.

Communicable disease reporting and surveillance has long been an essential component of disease control, through identification of transmission patterns, risk factors and sources. We would like to see similar strategies in place for non-communicable diseases, and cancer is an important one. We believe that the surveillance and data analysis initiatives proposed in our resolution would be of great value to public health in Ontario by informing strategies for control and resource allocation at the local level.

As local public health agencies have mandates in cancer prevention, this kind of collaboration will serve the third of Cancer Care Ontario's six priorities as outlined in its 2005-2008 Cancer Plan, that is, to "close the gap by reducing demand for cancer services and increasing capacity". We hope that this will then serve as a model for monitoring other diseases that are not commonly associated with outbreaks, but are nevertheless an important burden on the health care system.

Yours truly,

*ORIGINAL SIGNED*

Linda Stewart,  
Executive Director

**Copy:** Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health (Acting)  
Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario  
Hon. George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Hon. Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion

**Encl.**

**alPHa RESOLUTION A07-9**

**TITLE: Cancer Care Ontario Support for Boards of Health**

**SPONSOR: Durham Regional Council**

**WHEREAS** cancer is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality; and

**WHEREAS** boards of health are required to assess the population's health and to plan, implement and evaluate cancer prevention and screening programs and services in their respective health units; and

**WHEREAS** boards of health need accurate cancer incidence and mortality data in order to carry out their cancer prevention and screening mandates; and

**WHEREAS** boards of health receive health unit-wide cancer incidence and mortality data from Cancer Care Ontario (CCO) but are challenged with accessing data for smaller areas because of privacy considerations; and

**WHEREAS** boards of health need to develop local expertise in sophisticated data analysis to better understand cancer trends; and

**WHEREAS** boards of health and CCO need a mechanism or forum to share and discuss data quality issues so that public health epidemiologists can better interpret their findings;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** alPHa urges Cancer Care Ontario to develop the following:

- a clear process whereby boards of health may obtain timely data for areas smaller than the health unit level;
- mechanisms and/or workshops to train public health epidemiologists on cancer analysis techniques; and
- a forum by which boards of health and CCO can share findings and data quality issues;

**AND FURTHER THAT** the Premier of Ontario, Ministers of Health and Long-Term Care and Health Promotion, President and CEO, Cancer Care Ontario, Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health are so advised.