

## ALPHA RESOLUTION A08-11

**TITLE:** Poverty Reduction Strategy Linked to Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Base Funding

**SPONSOR:** Simcoe Muskoka Board of Health

WHEREAS in the winter of 2008, the Government of Ontario announced the establishment of The Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction, led by the Honourable Deb Matthews to develop a focused poverty reduction strategy by the end of 2008 to ensure all have increased opportunities for success; and

WHEREAS "Ontario's Poverty Reduction Plan" (Government of Ontario, 2008) identified that The Best Start Plan is designed to make sure that children are ready to learn by the time they start Grade One, and that "the Plan includes: The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program that gives families with new babies information on parenting and child development from before birth up to age six"; and

WHEREAS the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) Program's vision is consistent with the government's vision and commitment to poverty reduction; and

WHEREAS HBHC Program public health nurses identify risks that prevent healthy child development and achievement of optimal potential including parental high risk situations (e.g. substance misuse, mental illness, poverty, housing and food instability); and

WHEREAS through the HBHC ongoing intensive home visiting program public health nurses provide counselling, health teaching, case management, referrals and coordination of services; and

WHEREAS public health nurses and lay home visitors promote healthy birth outcomes, teach healthy child growth and development, enhance parents' self-esteem and provide them with referrals to community programs that enhance the child's optimal potential and facilitate opportunities for success; and

WHEREAS HBHC program benefits are likely to have the most positive and far-reaching impacts on low-income families due to a strong association with developmental risk factors; and

WHEREAS HBHC base funding and minimal annual increases over the past several years have been insufficient to maintain service levels under this program; and

WHEREAS the HBHC Program has been identified as a 100% funded program through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Association of Local Public Health Agencies urge the Government of Ontario to ensure that the Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction identifies the HBHC Program as a critical intervention in a poverty reduction strategy;

**AND FURTHER THAT** the Government of Ontario recognize that the HBHC Program provides services that Ontario's families require, particularly low income families, that assist families to overcome the impact of poverty, provide children with a healthy start in life, and enhance opportunities for life-long success contributing to a strong Ontario economy;

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**AND FURTHER THAT** the Government of Ontario provide a significant increase to base funding to cover the full costs of delivery for all eligible clients for HBHC Programs along with annual increases to maintain service delivery to complement the poverty reduction strategy;

**AND FURTHER THAT** the Association of Local Public Health Agencies utilize the results of the HBHC alpha survey conducted with its member boards of health to inform the development of an advocacy strategy focused on funding for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) Program;

**AND FURTHER THAT** the Association of Local Public Health Agencies work in partnership with other agencies or organizations regarding further advocacy strategies in support of the HBHC program.

ACTION FROM CONFERENCE:

Moved: D. McKeown (Toronto)  
Seconded: V. Blackmore (Middlesex-London)

**Resolution CARRIED AS AMENDED**