

alPHa RESOLUTION A09-3

- TITLE:** Continued Investment in Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy
- SPONSOR:** Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
- WHEREAS** Tobacco use remains the single largest cause of preventable disease and contributes to the premature death of 13,000 Ontarians annually; and
- WHEREAS** Although tobacco use has declined in Ontario over the last decade¹ (25% in 2000/01 versus 21% in 2007), representing 175,000 fewer smokers in the province, most recently this decline has not continued;² and
- WHEREAS** The Ontario Government has made a significant annual investment of \$60 million in the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy through the Ministry of Health Promotion since 2005, which has led to many gains in tobacco control in the past 4 years; and
- WHEREAS** This commitment has enabled public health units, in partnership with community and provincial tobacco control stakeholders, to plan, implement and evaluate comprehensive tobacco control initiatives and this multifaceted strategy has been effectively targeting prevention, protection (including enforcement) and cessation; and
- WHEREAS** The Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy has provided a unique opportunity for Ontario's youth, particularly through the health unit-based Youth Action Alliances, to play a significant role within their communities and schools to prevent youth smoking and protect youth from secondhand smoke; and
- WHEREAS** In 2007/08, the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion investment in comprehensive tobacco control under the Smoke-Free Ontario strategy corresponded to per capita funding of \$4.69; significantly lower than the recommended investment level from the US Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine (2007) of \$15-\$20 per capita to adequately sustain a comprehensive tobacco control program; and
- WHEREAS** Health units have been informed through a May 29, 2009 letter from the Ministry of Health Promotion that funding for Youth Action Alliances and high school grants is to be discontinued, and significant reductions are planned for other components of funding under the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy; and
- WHEREAS** Evidence from the experience in the United States indicated that funding for tobacco programs was highly effective in reducing tobacco use, and also showed

¹ Ontario Tobacco Research Unit. *Indicators of Smoke-Free Ontario Progress*. [Special Reports: Monitoring and Evaluation Series, 2006-2007 (Vol. 13, No. 2)]. Toronto, ON: Ontario Tobacco Research Unit; 2008a.

² CCHS 2000/01 and 2007 (from the Canadian Socio-economic Information Management System [CANSIM])

that reductions in tobacco funding resulted in slowed or reversed progress within months;^{3,4} and

WHEREAS To maintain the benefits from past efforts and investments, it is critical that Ontario sustain, and potentially increase the support for comprehensive tobacco control efforts.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that aPHa urge the Premier of Ontario, and the Minister of Health Promotion (Margarett Best), Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (David Caplan), Office of The Attorney General (Chris Bentley) and the Minister of Finance and Revenue (Dwight Duncan) to commit to the goal of preserving and enhancing reductions in tobacco use, and to this end to reinstate funding to 2008-2009 levels and in addition, enhance funding for comprehensive tobacco control efforts in Ontario.

AND FURTHERMORE BE IT RESOLVED that aPHa advocate for the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy to continue to include and further enhance the role of youth within health units as a key component of prevention programming, with a planned evaluation.

AND FURTHERMORE BE IT RESOLVED that aPHa communicate with and engage other provincial associations and organizations with a concern for public health to support the importance of reinstating and enhancing funding for comprehensive tobacco control efforts in order to preserve and enhance the gains made to date.

ACTION FROM CONFERENCE:

Moved: J. Pfaff (Simcoe Muskoka)
Seconded: B. Hughes (Timiskaming)

Resolution CARRIED AS AMENDED

³ Ontario Tobacco Research Unit. *OTRU Update: Effects of Funding Cuts to Tobacco Control Programs*. Toronto, ON: Ontario Tobacco Research Unit; 2008b.

⁴ Hotgrave, DR, Wunderring, KA, Vallone, DM Heaton, CG. Cost-Utility Analysis of the National truth Campaign to Prevent Youth Smoking. *Am J Preventive Medicine* 2009.01.020