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Providing leadership in public health management

Hon. Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Room 281
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A1

July 7, 2009

Honourable Premier,

Re. Immediate and Full Funding for the Dental Program for Low-Income Families

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 to urge you to take immediate steps to improve dental health for low-income adult Ontarians.

Leading up to the 2007 provincial election, we were very pleased to hear your promise of a \$45M per year dental program for Ontario's low-income families. We were equally pleased to see this pledge become a firm commitment in the 2008 provincial budget, where your government proposed to invest \$135 million over three years to provide dental services to low-income Ontarians, with those investments starting in 2008-09.

We are still waiting for delivery on this important commitment, and were concerned that the only mention of this promise in the 2009 budget was its listing as an "achievement" since 2003 in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Sector Highlights document. While we welcome the recent expansion of the CINOT program to include children up to the age of 18 as an important first step, this represents only 20% of the original commitment and we cannot agree that this yet qualifies as the achievement of a dental program for low income Ontarians.

Too many low-income adult Ontarians are still awaiting access to the provincial dental program that they were promised nearly two years ago. We are therefore urging you, as we did in the attached resolution from October 2008, to immediately and fully implement the dental program for low income families as promised in the 2008 provincial budget.

We certainly understand that Ontario is currently facing unprecedented economic challenges, but we repeat that it is precisely because of these challenges and not despite them that the provincial government must accelerate and not delay such investments. A healthy province is impossible without healthy people.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Valerie Sterling
President

Copy

Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health Division
Hon. Deb Matthews, Minister, Children and Youth Services,
Hon. Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion
Hon. David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long Term Care
Hon. Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance
Hon. Madeliene Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services
Dr. Sandra Bennett, Senior Dental Consultant & Child Health Consultant, Ministry of
Health Promotion
Dr. Dick Ito, President, Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry (OAPHD)
Chairs, Ontario Boards of Health



ALPHA RESOLUTION A08-12

TITLE: Provincial Dental Program

SPONSOR: Toronto Board of Health

WHEREAS low income Ontarians in need of dental care to relieve pain and suffering require assistance now;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) urge the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Provincial Poverty Reduction Committee and the Premier of Ontario to immediately implement the dental program for low income families as promised in the 2008 provincial budget.

ACTION FROM CONFERENCE:

Moved: R. Pellizzari (Peterborough)

Seconded: B. Hughes (Timiskaming)

Resolution CARRIED