

**Ministry of
Health Promotion**

Office of the Deputy Minister

777 Bay Street, 18th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 1S5
Tel.: 416 326-8475
Fax: 416 326-8409
TTY: 416 212-5723
TTY Toll Free: 1 866 263-1410
www.mhp.gov.on.ca

**Ministère de la
Promotion de la santé**

Bureau du sous-ministre

777, rue Bay, 18^e étage
Toronto ON M7A 1S5
Tél. : 416 326-8475
Télec. : 416 326-8409
ATS : 416 212-5723
ATS sans frais : 1 866 263-1410
www.mhp.gov.on.ca



MHP2304DC-2009-54

SEP 11 2009

Ms. Valerie Sterling
President
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa)
425 University Avenue, Suite 502
Toronto ON M5G 1T6

RECEIVED

SEP 15 2009

alPHa

Dear Ms. Sterling:

Thank you for your correspondence sharing the resolution by your organization regarding the New Directions in Tobacco Control and Healthy Communities Approach initiatives. I welcome your comments and appreciate the opportunity to respond to your concerns.

Our government recognizes the importance of ensuring that children and youth do not start smoking. Studies indicate if a person does not start smoking before the age of 19, chances are they never will.

This is why the Ministry of Health Promotion has made funding available to local public health units to undertake youth engagement programming until the end of March 2010.

As you know, the ministry has launched a process to refresh the Smoke-Free Ontario (SFO) Strategy by engaging key stakeholders to advise us on the development of a new long-term plan for tobacco control. The ministry has also initiated the Youth Engagement Advisory Group to assist our government in developing a new youth engagement strategy to advance Ontario's health promotion objectives, and to identify an inclusive framework for youth engagement.

As we develop our new youth engagement strategy we will look for opportunities to provide access to resources through initiatives such as the ministry's After-School Strategy, which contains a tobacco control component, and the new Healthy Communities Fund.

I would like to assure you that we will continue to focus on preventing youth from starting to smoke, building on our investments in innovative youth-focused programs. It is imperative that we build on past success and move forward with a comprehensive approach that includes all Ontarians, particularly our children and youth.

.../2

We acknowledge that smoking prevalence rates in North America have reached a plateau. More needs to be done on tobacco control, despite the success of ministry-supported initiatives such as Leave The Pack Behind and the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*. This is why we have embarked on the next phase of planning to keep the SFO Strategy viable and forward-looking, including how we manage tobacco use in the broader context of chronic disease prevention.

We are reinforcing our focus on tobacco with approaches that probe the benefits of addressing tobacco addiction through related risk factors. For example, the ministry is engaging in a pilot project with the Ottawa Heart Institute and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to learn how the Ottawa Model cessation protocol may be leveraged to address Type 2 diabetes prevention, and to potentially capitalize on opportunities to encourage patients receiving treatment for diabetes to quit smoking.

I would like to assure you that the ministry is committed to developing both tobacco-specific programs and targets as well as undertaking research to learn as much as we can about successful multi-risk factor approaches in health promotion.

The ministry appreciates the invaluable work of our aPHa partners in providing Ontarians with opportunities to make better health choices in their lives. I look forward to continued collaboration with aPHa as we pursue our shared objective of a healthier Ontario.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours truly,



Angela Longo
Deputy Minister

- c: Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance
Hon. David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hon. Chris Bentley, Attorney General
Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Francoise Bouchard, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health
Mr. Michael Perley, Director, Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco
Dr. George Pasut, Co-chair, Tobacco Strategy Advisory Group
Ms. Jean Lam, Co-chair, Tobacco Strategy Advisory Group