

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9

NOV 24 2009

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alPHa

Ms. Linda Stewart
Executive Director
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
502-425 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1TG

Dear Ms. Stewart:

Thank you for your correspondence of August 19, 2009, with which you enclosed a copy of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies' (alPHa) Resolution A09-8 concerning the 2008 listeriosis outbreak in Ontario. I regret the delay in responding.

The objectives of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and those of alPHa are closely aligned, and we value our close working relationship to promote healthy living and reduce preventable chronic diseases.

Since the listeriosis outbreak of 2008, governments at all levels have increased their efforts to detect and respond to foodborne illness outbreaks earlier, thereby reducing health risks to Canadians. The Government of Canada recently announced \$75 million to support the implementation of the federal portion of the 57 recommendations of the *Report of the Independent Investigator into the 2008 Listeriosis Outbreak*. This investment will improve the Government's ability to prevent, detect and respond to future food-borne illness outbreaks, and builds on Budget 2008's \$113-million commitment to support Canada's Food and Consumer Safety Action Plan.

PHAC has taken steps to learn from the events of last summer and has identified areas in our food safety system that require strengthening. The Agency has also benefited not just from our own post-outbreak lessons learned, but also from analyses of events from the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Independent Investigator's Report. We have publicly committed to act on all 57 of the Report's recommendations. The message conveyed to food safety partners is to examine ways to work more collaboratively with each other and, to this end, we have examined the health and public

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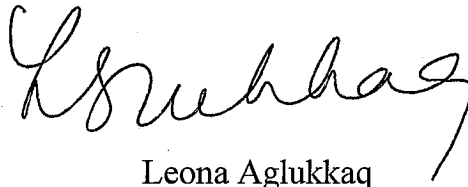
health-specific findings of the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario's *Report on the Management of the 2008 Listeriosis Outbreak in Ontario*.

As the lead federal organization responsible for protecting public health in foodborne emergencies, PHAC has committed to act in areas that will strengthen the public health response to foodborne illness outbreaks. The Agency is improving communication with groups at greatest risk for foodborne illness, and is also working with federal partners, such as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, along with provincial and territorial partners, to better coordinate our early detection methods and to improve information sharing in outbreak situations. We will be advancing food safety in Canada through alliances with our provincial and territorial counterparts. Our efforts will contribute to creating a more robust food safety system for Canadians.

Your suggestions and comments are appreciated and we will take them into consideration as we move forward to advance food safety from a public health perspective.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leona Aglukkaq', written in a cursive style.

Leona Aglukkaq