

April 21, 2010

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

Dear Premier McGuinty:

It has come to our attention that the Ontario government is exploring options that could result in the semi-privatization of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO). According to information circulating in print media, there is an option within the coming 'Open Ontario' five-year strategy to consolidate publicly held corporations [LCBO, Hydro One, Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, and others] and assets and combine them into a larger entity of which minority shares would be made available to private investors..

There is a clear body of scientific evidence correlating privatization of alcohol sales and increased accessibility of alcohol and alcohol-related harms. These social harms such as chronic disease, crime, injury and addiction come at great cost to the citizens of Ontario and its government. Over time, these costs will surpass any short term gains in cost-management or job creation sought by the privatization initiative.

In fact, data collected following privatization in the province of Alberta and semi-privatization in British Columbia have shown marked expansion in alcohol availability and a significant spike in alcohol consumption and related harms as a direct result.<sup>i,2</sup>

As such, it is imperative that your government reconsider the potential private sale of a share of the LCBO, even merely as part of an amalgam of public corporations. To proceed would be a decision which undermines public health and safety, while concurrently creating untenable future costs including health-care costs.

Finance Minister Dwight Duncan was quoted in the *Toronto Star* on March 6, 2010, as indicating this semi-privatization plan is in "the long-term interests of all Ontarians". Given the potential health impacts resulting from a decision to include the LCBO as part of this semi-privatization, the government's plan must be rethought as it is actually contrary to the long-term interests of Ontarians to take this step.

I look forward to hearing of your intentions on this issue.

Sincerely,

**Original signed by**

Dennis Roughley  
Chair, Board of Health  
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

DR:JF:mk

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c: Dwight Duncan Minister of Finance  
Margarett Best Minister of Health Promotion  
Deborah Matthews Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Julia Munroe MPP York Simcoe  
Garfield Dunlop MPP Simcoe North  
Aileen Carroll MPP Barrie  
Norm Miller, MPP Parry Sound-Muskoka  
Jim Wilson MPP Simcoe Grey  
All Ontario Boards of Health  
Linda Stewart, Executive Director, aPHa

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<sup>1</sup> CAMH Position Paper: Retail Alcohol Monopolies and Regulation: Preserving the Public Interest, January 2004. accessed at [http://www.camh.net/Public\\_policy/Public\\_policy\\_papers/retail\\_alcohol\\_monopolies.html](http://www.camh.net/Public_policy/Public_policy_papers/retail_alcohol_monopolies.html) on April 6, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Kendall, P. R. W. (2008) Public Health Approach to Alcohol Policy – An Update Report from the Provincial Health Officer. BC: Office of the Provincial Health Officer.