

January 27, 2006



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

Dear Premier McGuinty:

At a regular Board of Health meeting for the Grey Bruce Health Unit, held January 20, 2006, the following resolution was passed:

**Meeting Food Costs for All Low Income and Social Assistance Recipients**

Date: January 20, 2006

Moved By: Carl Noble

Resolution # 2006-07

Seconded By: Charlie Bagnato

**WHEREAS the cost of eating well in Grey-Bruce continues to show an upward increase (13% increase since 1999) as determined by the results of the annual *Nutritious Food Basket Survey* ; and**

**WHEREAS** current social assistance and minimum wage rates create a significant barrier to accessing adequate nutrition in order to support health and well-being (Ontario Public Health Association Food Security Workgroup, 2003) ; a family of four receiving Ontario Works is eligible to receive a maximum allowance of \$1,215.00 per month to cover all expenses including food, rent, utilities, clothing and other necessities, a full time worker [40 hrs/wk] can be expected to earn \$1,222.00 per month to cover all expenses including health care costs in the absence of employer-provided health benefits (alPHA Resolution Background Information, 2005); and

**WHEREAS** people with low incomes are the most vulnerable to poor health (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2004); and

**WHEREAS** barriers to food access include both economic and physical factors such as higher food prices, poor selection of healthy foods, and long distances to food retail outlets (Region of Waterloo Public Health, 2004); and

**WHEREAS** adequate nutrition is essential for proper growth and development as well as a significant factor in preventing many chronic diseases including cancer (alPHA Resolution Background Information, 2005);

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Health of the Grey Bruce Health Unit recommend that the Province of Ontario ensure that all low income and social assistance

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recipients receive an increase for monthly food costs and that this be sent as a food support program midmonth cheque;

**AND FURTHER** that the Board of Health of the Grey Bruce Health Unit call upon the provincial government to assume full responsibility for funding Ontario's food support program.

**AND FURTHER** that the Government of Ontario be urged to review the adequacy of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program rates from a health perspective and that allowances for basic needs and shelter be based on actual current representative costs;

**AND FURTHER** that the Government of Ontario be urged to review the current minimum wage from a health perspective and establish a living wage for all Ontario workers;

**AND FURTHER** that copies of this letter be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario and to our local Member of Parliament, Members of Provincial Parliament, the Ministers of Community and Social Services, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Minister of Health Promotion, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, the Ontario Public Health Association, all Medical Officers of Health, and all Board of Health Chairpersons.

Carried Unanimously.

Your immediate attention to this matter is requested.

Yours truly,

*Original Signed By*

Hazel Lynn, MD, FCFP, MHSc  
Medical Officer of Health

HL/st

cc: The Hon. J. Watson, Minister of Health Promotion  
The Honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
The Honourable Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance  
The Honourable Monte Kwinter, Minister of Community and Social Services  
Dr. Sheela Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Larry J. Miller, MP Grey-Bruce-Owen Sound  
Bill Murdoch, MPP Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound  
John Tory, MPP Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey  
Carol Mitchell, MPP Huron-Bruce  
Jim Wilson, MPP Simcoe-Grey  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA)  
Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA)  
Ontario Boards of Health, Chairs  
Ontario Medical Officers of Health