

April 22, 2009

Honourable Deb Matthews
Minister of Children and Youth Services
14th Floor, 56 Wellesley St. West
Toronto ON M5S 2S3

Dear Minister Matthews:

RE: Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC) Funding and Reduction of Services

The Board of Health, at its March 25, 2009 meeting passed the following motions:

THAT the Board reluctantly approve the 2009 Healthy Babies, Healthy Children budget as presented, and

THAT a letter be written to the Minister of Children and Youth Services, to be sent along with the budget submission, outlining the reduction in services to the KFL&A Public Health's Healthy Baby Healthy Children Program and the additional amount that is required to maintain service at the 2008-2009 level, and

THAT the Board write to the Minister of Health and Long-term Care and the Minister of Health Promotion, requesting their approval to use resources from the public health funding from these Ministries to assist in meeting the Ontario Public Health Standards for the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program; and meet the Government of Ontario's targets for the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program, given the critical importance of this program to the health and well-being of mothers and newborns in this area and the lack of funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to meet these standards.

This letter is to advise you of further reductions of services to KFLA Public Health's HBHC program as a result of the funding freeze by the MCYS. To maintain 2008 staffing and service levels in 2009, an additional \$65,000 is needed for the base budget. KFLA PH has been advised by officials in your Ministry that there will not be enhancements to the budget in 2009 and with this in mind, has again reduced staff and services and advised physicians in this area of these reductions, starting the first of March 2009. All required service components of the program will continue but the timelines and frequency for all activities will be reduced, in some cases significantly. Beginning March 2, 2009, services will be reduced from the 2008-09 allocation by another 0.5 FTE public health nurse (PHN) and 0.5 program support.

Since 2007, to stay within the Ministry of Children and Youth Services budget allocation, the KFL&A Public Health HBHC program has lost 1820 hours of PHN time, which is equivalent to 250 families not receiving services.

The reduction in services to HBHC means that KFLA Public Health will not be able to comply fully with the Ontario Public Health Standards HBHC protocol. We have communicated with HBHC stakeholders that:

- Consenting postpartum mothers will receive a postpartum contact from a PHN, but not within 48 hours of discharge from hospital. Priorities will be set for contacts based on information received from the hospital and will only occur during regular business hours.
- Postpartum home visits will no longer be the norm and will only be offered to those families in highest need, as identified by the PHN involved with the family.
- Families receiving support with blended home visiting will receive less timely and fewer visits.

Half of the births in the KFL&A area are to first-time mothers, many of whom are discharged from hospital within 24 hours of delivery and who do not have the knowledge, experience, or supports to recognize the warning signs when their newborn infant is not thriving and is at risk of neonatal complications. It is of great concern to us that the birth rate in KFL&A continues to increase and mothers and newborns continue to be discharged as quickly as possible from hospital, while the capacity of the HBHC program to respond appropriately is hampered because of insufficient staffing directly owing to the funding freeze from the MCYS.

These converging events are placing babies and children in the KFL&A area at increased risk for an untoward incident.

To discuss these reductions in services and the budget policy of the MCYS, the KFL&A Board of Health is hereby requesting a meeting with you at your convenience.

Yours truly,



Beth Pater, Chair
KFL&A Board of Health

Attachment

Copy to: M. Stein, Manager, Early Learning & Child Development Branch, MCYS
A. Richea, M. Mompeii, Program Consultants, MCYS
Hon. D. Duncan, Minister of Finance
Hon. J. Gerretsen, MPP, Kingston and the Islands
Hon. R. Hillier, MPP, Lanark, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington
Board of Health members
L. Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Medical Officers of Health, Local Public Health Agencies

KINGSTON, FRONTENAC AND LENNOX & ADDINGTON PUBLIC HEALTH

Main Office

221 Portsmouth Avenue, Kingston, Ontario K7M 1V5
Tel: 613-549-1232 1-800-267-7875
Fax: 613-549-7896 www.kflapublichealth.ca



Branch Offices

Cloyne	Tel: 613-336-8989	Fax: 613-336-0522
Sharbot Lake	Tel: 613-279-2151	Fax: 613-279-3997
Napanee	Tel: 613-354-3357	Fax: 613-354-6267