



THE CITY OF
HAMILTON
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

October, 30, 2008

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NOV 1 - 2008 File # C08-022

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Premier Dalton McGuinty
Room 281, Legislative Building
Queens Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Mr. Premier:

Re: Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) Report (BOH0028)

The 2008 Nutritious Food Basket Report for Hamilton identifies the difficulty that individuals and families receiving social assistance or earning a minimum wage have in purchasing adequate food to meet their nutritional needs.

Nutritious food is a basic pre-requisite for health and well-being. Individuals in food insufficient households are more likely to report poor general health, major depression and distress, and multiple chronic conditions including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and food allergies.

Families need adequate incomes that allow them to buy nutritious food if they are to reduce their risk of health problems. Research shows that children who have access to nutritious food perform better in school, place less of a demand on the health system, and exhibit fewer negative psycho-social behaviours.

Food and income security are two critical elements of a poverty reduction strategy. Children and families who have adequate and sustainable levels of financial resources have the increased capacity to live a healthier quality of life.

Hamilton City Council, at its meeting held October 29, 2008, approved Item 6 of Board of Health Report 08-010 and requests your support to urge the Government to act on the following recommendations from the Poverty Reduction Strategy as soon as possible:

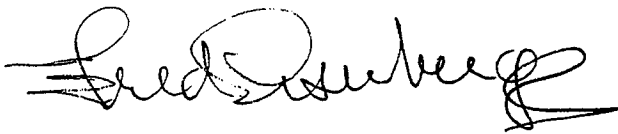
- (i) Establish an independent committee including low-income people, policy experts and advocates to develop rational and just criteria for determining Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates;

- (ii) Implement OW and ODSP rates that reflect the real cost of living and are indexed annually to reflect inflation, including the findings of yearly Nutritious Food Basket surveys conducted by local Boards of Health based on protocols established by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long- Term Care;
- (iii) Set the shelter component maximum for OW clients at 85 percent of the median market rent for each local housing market, based on annual surveys conducted by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation;
- (iv) Make significant investments in affordable housing.

The Medical Officer of Health concurs with this recommendation.

Your consideration of Council's request is appreciated. Please reference file # C08-022 when responding to this correspondence.

Sincerely,



Fred Eisenberger
Mayor

Copies to:

The Honourable David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
The Honourable Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion
The Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
The Honourable Deborah Matthews, Minister of Children and Youth Services
The Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services
The Honourable Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Peter Fonseca, Minister of Labour
Dr. G. Pasut, Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health and Long Term Care
Ms. L. Stewart, Executive Director of Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alpha)
Dr. G. Aslanyan, President, Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA)
Ms. Tara Brown, Chairperson, Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health
Ontario Boards of Health
Paul Miller, MPP, Hamilton East
Andrea Horwath, MPP, Hamilton Centre
Sophia Aggelonitis, MPP, Hamilton Mountain
Ted McMeekin, MPP, Ancaster – Dundas – Flamborough – Aldershot
Tim Hudak, MPP, Niagara West - Glanbrook
Ms. L. Weaver, Director, Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction