



SIMCOE COUNTY  
DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT  
15 Sperling Drive, Barrie, Ontario L4M 6K9

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
Dr. George Pasut  
TEL: 705-721-7330 FAX: 705-721-1495

February 24, 2005

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

Dear Premier McGuinty:

Re: Possible Privatization of the LCBO

I am writing this letter to urge you to further consider the implications of privatizing the LCBO.

Alcohol is not a benign consumer product. Alcohol causes serious problems in our society and is a prime contributor to injuries. Risks related to alcohol use include certain cancers, alcohol dependence, liver disease, heart disease, suicide, traffic and other injuries. Alcohol is the third most important risk factor for burden of disease to Canadians and the number one avoidable risk factor for burden of disease in adolescents and young adults.

According to the Statistical Report on the Health of Canadians (1999), 42 per cent of the 630 drivers who died in Ontario had been under the influence of alcohol. Simcoe County is not an exception to these numbers. In 1995 there were 171 collisions involving an impaired driver resulting in 94 reported injuries and deaths.

In Simcoe County, 78 per cent of residents aged 12 and over report that they are current drinkers. While most residents of Simcoe County drink at low risk levels and may not encounter serious problems with alcohol, one in 12 people report drinking at hazardous or harmful levels. Forty per cent of current drinkers in Simcoe County have engaged in binge drinking within the past year and five per cent of those current drinkers report binge drinking at least once per week.

The health and social costs highlight the need for mechanisms that regulate the sale and use of alcohol.

BRANCH  
OFFICES:

【 **Collingwood**  
280 Pretty River Pkwy. L9Y 4J5  
TEL: 445-0804 FAX: 445-6498

【 **Midland**  
1156 St. Andrew's Drive, Box 626, L4R 4L3  
TEL: 526-9324 FAX: 526-1513

【 **Orillia**  
575 West St., S. Unit 12, L3V 7N6  
TEL: 325-9565 FAX: 325-2091

【 **Cookstown**  
25 King St., S., Unit 2, L0L 1L0  
TEL: 458-1103 FAX: 458-0105

A research study sponsored by the World Health Organization, "Alcohol, No Ordinary Commodity", highlights that privatizing the sale of liquor would almost certainly mean increased access to alcohol through the proliferation of liquor sales outlets, longer hours of sale and less stringent attention to age of majority. This in turn will lead to increased consumption and sales to under-aged and intoxicated individuals as well as increased problems related to monitoring and enforcement.

I believe that the cornerstone to healthy public policy related to alcohol includes effective controls on alcohol. Government retail monopolies provide the most effective means to protect the public interest. Therefore, I urge you, in the interest of the health of Ontarians, to maintain and improve the current system of government-regulated LCBO's.

I am interested in knowing more about your next steps and look forward to a response at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



George Pasut MD, MHSc, FRCPC, FACPM  
Medical Officer of Health

copy to:      Minister of Finance  
                  Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
                  Chief Medical Officer of Health  
                  Deputy Minister of Consumer and Business Services  
                  Centre for Addiction and Mental Health  
                  Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
                  Ontario Public Health Association