

October 13, 2009

Honourable Margaret Best
Minister – Minister's Office
Minister of Health Promotion
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1S5

Dear Minister Best:

Health promotion and disease prevention play a key role in our health system. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Health Promotion have worked hard to develop community-based programs in co-operation with Public Health Units across Ontario and a wide range of local initiatives, such as those involved with FOCUS Communities. These programs are designed to address specific local needs while mobilizing broader community participation and resources.

There is still work to be done at the community level. For example, in 2007 within the North Bay Parry Sound District, a significantly higher percentage of residents, 12 years and over, reported being a heavy drinker (29.4%), compared to Ontario (21.1%). In the Initial Report on Public Health, August 2009, the proportion of youth in the North Bay Parry Sound District who reported consuming five or more drinks on at least one occasion in the past 12 months was 65% compared to 25% for all Ontario.

Community-based programs, such as FOCUS Communities, play an important role in preventing alcohol and other substance abuse that takes a toll on individuals, families and our community as a whole.

The Board of Health for North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit encourages the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Health Promotion to continue to fund community-based programs that focus on health promotion and disease prevention that address local issues, such as alcohol and drug abuse.

Yours sincerely,

Original signed by

Mac Bain, Chairperson
Board of Health

Copied to: Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care; Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario; Tim Hudak, Conservative Party of Ontario; Andrea Horwath, New Democratic Party of Ontario; Honourable Monique Smith, MPP (Nipissing); Norm Miller, MPP (Parry Sound/Muskoka); David Ramsay, MPP (Timiskaming-Cochrane); Member Municipal Councils; Ontario Boards of Health; Linda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies; Wendy Carew, Director of Health Promotion & Resource Services, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit