

November 19, 2009

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty  
Premier of Ontario and Minister of Research and Innovation  
Hepburn Block, Room 281, Main Legislative Building  
Queens's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A4

Dear Premier McGuinty:

**Subject: Poverty and Healthy Eating**

---

We are deeply concerned about the impact of poverty on the health of the residents in the North Bay Parry Sound District. With the 2008 release of *Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy*, your government acknowledged the fact that we must make a long-term commitment to reduce levels of poverty to preserve and promote the health of all Ontarians. We welcome renewed efforts by the government and its ministries to ensure poverty reduction remains a high priority and that specific steps are taken to ensure low income individuals and families have sufficient income to purchase adequate nutritious food.

The relationship between poverty and poor health is clear. Poor nutrition can lead to increased risk for chronic and infectious diseases, pregnancy outcomes with greater risk for low birth weight, and negative impact on the growth and development of children. It costs more to treat and manage these chronic conditions than to prevent them by ensuring people can afford an adequate diet.

Our local 2009 Nutritious Food Basket data and another local report, *Poverty Reduction in Nipissing District: Perspectives and Priorities* (May 2008) agree with mounting evidence across the province. Individuals and families reliant on income supports through Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Programs (ODSP) are unable to afford the high costs of living **and** feed their families an adequate diet. They are instead forced to rely on charitable community supports like food banks and church food programs. We strongly urge your government to:

- Introduce a \$100 Healthy Food Supplement for all Ontarians living on social assistance and funded solely by the province of Ontario
- Implement Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program 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 protocol established by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- Establish an independent committee including low-income people, policy experts and advocates to develop rational and just criteria for determining Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program rates

**Letter To:** The Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario

**Subject:** Poverty and Healthy Eating

**Date:** November 19, 2009

---

We look forward to your attention in addressing the challenges of providing a nutritious diet for low-income families, and to your sustained efforts to address the growing wealth gap in this province.

Yours sincerely,

*Original signed by*

Mac Bain, Chairperson  
Board of Health

Enclosure (1)

Copied to:

- 1) The Honourable Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion
- 2) The Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
- 3) The Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services
- 4) The Honourable Laurel Broten, Minister of Children and Youth Services
- 5) The Honourable Monique Smith, MPP (Nipissing)
- 6) David Ramsay, MPP (Timiskaming- Cochrane)
- 7) Norm Miller, MPP (Parry Sound/Muskoka)
- 8) The Honourable Tony Clement, M.P. (Parry Sound-Muskoka)
- 9) Anthony Rota, M.P. (Nipissing-Timiskaming)
- 10) Bill White, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board
- 11) Janet Patterson, Chief Administrative Officer, Parry Sound District Social Services Administration Board
- 12) Peter Clutterbuck, Social Planning Network of Ontario
- 13) Ontario Boards of Health
- 14) Member Municipalities
- 15) Linda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
- 16) Pat Vanini, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario

**NORTH BAY PARRY SOUND DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT  
BOARD OF HEALTH**

**RESOLUTION**

<b>DATE:</b>	<u>October 28, 2009</u>	<b>MOVED BY:</b>	<u>Cam Hunter</u>
<b>RESOLUTION #</b>	<u>BOH/2009/10/02</u>	<b>SECONDED BY:</b>	<u>Bill Russell</u>

*Whereas, It is accepted that one of the key determinants of health that affects the health of a community is sufficient income,*

*Whereas, A nutritious diet is a basic requirement for health and well-being,*

*Whereas, The most significant barrier to a nutritious diet is inadequate income,*

*Whereas, Households on social assistance or minimum wage cannot afford a nutritious diet after paying housing and other fixed costs,*

*Whereas, Poor nutrition leads to an increased risk for chronic and infectious diseases, which cost more to treat and manage than to prevent,*

*Whereas, Ensuring people have enough funds to purchase an adequate and nutritious diet is an effective disease prevention strategy<sup>1</sup>,*

*Whereas, Local data indicates more residents in the Health Unit service area experience lower incomes than the average in Ontario and Canada,*

**Therefore Be It Resolved,** That the Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit write a letter to the Premier of Ontario requesting:

- i) *the introduction of a \$100 Healthy Food Supplement for all Ontarians living on social assistance, funded solely by the Province of Ontario*
- ii) *the implementation of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program 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 protocol established by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care*
- iii) *the establishment of 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; and*

**Furthermore Be It Resolved,** That the Board of Health endorse the Put Food in the Budget/Do the Math campaign that promotes the introduction of a \$100 Healthy Food Supplement, and

*Furthermore Be It Resolved, That copies of the resolution be forwarded to the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, Ontario Ministers of Health Promotion, Health and Long-Term Care, Community and Social Services, Children and Youth Services, MP's and MPP's representing our service area, and to Ontario Boards of Health, Member Municipalities, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board, and the Parry Sound District Social Services Administration Board, for their information and possible support.*

CARRIED: \_\_\_\_\_ ✓

DEFEATED: \_\_\_\_\_

AS AMENDED: \_\_\_\_\_

CHAIRPERSON: \_\_\_\_\_

*Original Signed by  
Mac Bain*

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARED AND SEAT(S) VACATED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**RECORDED VOTE:**

For:  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
9. \_\_\_\_\_  
10. \_\_\_\_\_  
11. \_\_\_\_\_  
12. \_\_\_\_\_  
13. \_\_\_\_\_

Against:  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
9. \_\_\_\_\_  
10. \_\_\_\_\_  
11. \_\_\_\_\_  
12. \_\_\_\_\_  
13. \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> OPHA Resolution: #5 *Access to a Nutritious Diet for All*, 2007 ([http://www.opha.on.ca/ppres/2007-05\\_res.pdf](http://www.opha.on.ca/ppres/2007-05_res.pdf))