



# Northwestern Health Unit

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September 9, 2010

Valerie Sterling  
President, Board of Directors  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
2 Carlton Street, Suite 1306  
Toronto, ON M5B 1J3

Dear Ms. Sterling:

Re: Proposed Legislative Changes to CMOH Authority over Boards of Health

As Chair of the Board of Health for the Northwestern Health Unit, I wish to voice my concern regarding recent correspondence from alPHA on behalf of Boards of Health that is included in the CMOH\_H1N1\_MemoToBoards\_Aug17f.pdf. package forwarded by Gord Fleming on August 17, 2010, via the alPHA listserv.

In your memo to all Boards of Health dated August 16, 2010, "Proposed Legislative Changes to CMOH Authority over Boards of Health", you state,

We hope that you will be able to contact your local MPP to explain why local Boards and Medical Officers of Health have significant concerns about the proposed changes...

In your letter co-signed by Dr. Paul Roumeliotis sent to Dr. Arlene King dated July 15, 2010, regarding her report, *The H1N1 Pandemic- How Ontario Fared*, you state that you are writing to provide

...our thoughts on the legislated changes that are being proposed...which are unequivocally shared by our members at large, both at the MOH and Board of Health levels.

I question how alPHA can assume that there is any consensus that Boards of Health oppose these proposed changes, as I do not recall any alPHA Resolution regarding this matter.

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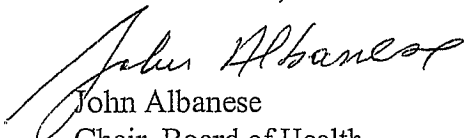
As one of the Public Health Units who followed the Chief Medical Officer of Health's directions during the H1N1 Pandemic, we were left with egg on our face when others chose to ignore her direction regarding immunization of priority populations – which, as a result, put us on the defensive as to why we were not opening up our clinics when other Health Units were doing so.

In the case of a Public Health Emergency we need clear direction. Permitting individual Health Units to opt out of following the direction of the CMOH is not in the best interest of the province as a whole. While the CMOH's decisions may not be perceived to be optimal for an individual Health Unit, we are often not privy to the 'big picture' scenario. It is incumbent upon all Health Units to remember what we hold to be one of the cornerstones of Public Health: it is the collective good, not the individual good, that is paramount.

I also believe it is an excellent recommendation for the Chief Medical Officer of Health to be involved in the appointments of Medical Officers of Health, as they are the most qualified person within the government to make that decision.

I would request that, in future when you or any ALPHA representative sends similar correspondence on behalf of ALPHA's members, in the absence of a relevant ALPHA Resolution, you qualify your statements by saying 'some of our members' rather than making a blanket statement that is misleading to say the least.

Yours in Health,

  
John Albanese  
Chair, Board of Health  
Northwestern Health Unit

c: Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Allison Stuart, Assistant Deputy Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Dan Carbin, Senior Adviser, Health Policy Issues, Office of the Premier  
Mary Lowe, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Linda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
✓ Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, Chair, COMOH  
Dr. Jim Arthurs, Medical Officer of Health (A)  
Mark Perrault, Chief Executive Officer  
Board of Health Correspondence