

December 8, 2008

Hon. Margaret Best
Minister of Health Promotion
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1S5

Dear Minister Best:

RE: Smoke-Free Ontario Youth Action Alliances

The Board of Health for Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health, at its meeting of November 26, 2008, passed the following motion:

THAT the Board of Health write to the Minister of Health Promotion, the Hon. Margaret Best, to express their strong support for:

- 1. ongoing and enhanced Ministry of Health Promotion funding of Youth Action Alliances (YAAs) and their engagement in tobacco control work,**
- 2. the need for further funding to support the expansion of YAAs to address other healthy lifestyle topic areas,**
- 3. the need for further enhancement capacity of public health to expand the YAA program; and**

THAT the Board of Health request that the Ministry of Health Promotion engage in consultations with local public health agencies to determine the most appropriate model for this expansion; and

THAT the Board of Health also communicate its support for the continued and enhanced funding for Youth Action Alliances to the Minister of Health & Long-Term Care, local MPPs, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, and to other Boards of Health in Ontario.

The Ministry of Health Promotion with the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy has established a very successful and effective peer leadership program in the Youth Action Alliances (YAA) within public health units across Ontario. The YAA's have not only enabled young people to learn the skills needed to work on policy related tobacco control issues, but more importantly, promoted youth participants' understanding of how, through collective action, they can positively affect change in their community and change social norms.

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KINGSTON, FRONTENAC AND LENNOX & ADDINGTON PUBLIC HEALTH

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Kingston, Frontenac, and Lennox & Addington Public Health, similarly to colleagues in other public health agencies in Ontario, have identified the potential value of employing youth to address other issues of public health importance. We see the value in expanding the current tobacco peer leadership programs to include other chronic disease and healthy lifestyle issues, while not detracting from or reducing the tobacco initiative which is so important in addressing the factors that make it remain a major threat to health.

The KFL&A Board of Health encourages you strongly to use the Youth Action Alliance model for other health promotion areas, given its demonstrated effectiveness in the area of tobacco use reduction.

Yours truly,



Beth Pater, Chair
KFL&A Board of Health

cc: Board of Health members
Hon. David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-term Care
Ms. Linda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Hon. John Gerretsen, MPP, Kingston and the Islands
Randy Hillier, MPP, Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington
Boards of Health, Ontario Local Public Health Agencies