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June 12, 2008

Premier Dalton McGuinty
Legislative Building
Queens Park, ON
M7A 1A1

Re: Deliberations on Restricting Cell Phone Usage in Automobiles

Dear Premier McGuinty:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of OPHA, please accept our support for the steps your government has taken to explore restrictions on the use of cell phones and other peripheral devices in automobiles. OPHA would appreciate the opportunity to participate actively in any upcoming deliberations on cell phone use as the issue develops.

OPHA was one of the first public health organizations to take a keen interest in the potential health risks of cell phone. This interest was extensively articulated in a 2003 position paper titled *Health Risks of Cellular Telephone: The Myth and the Reality*. At that time the risk of cell phone use focused on possible links to cancer of various forms and effects on the immune system. OPHA continues to monitor the scientific community for new developments on this aspect of cell phone usage.

Society's dependence on cell phones has grown to near-indispensability and the debate has shifted to issues of safety and injury prevention. The National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy recently released a systematic review of the issue titled *Public Health Advisory on the Effects of Cell Phone Use While Driving, with Recommendations*. The review includes an award-winning study showing that there is clear risk of injury due to cell phone use and that the difference between hand-held and hands-free cell phones is negligible. OPHA sees the regulation of cell phone usage as a pressing issue that can be addressed through policy change and regulation.

We would value the opportunity to participate in the various levels of deliberation on the issue as your government maintains an already admirable record of achievement in taking steps to protect the public and achieve prosperity by sustaining a healthy population.

Sincerely,



Carol Timmings
President, OPHA