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Constituent Societies

ANDSOOHA – Public Health
Nursing Management in Ontario

Association of Ontario
Health Centres

Association of Public Health
Epidemiologists in Ontario

Association of Supervisors of Public
Health Inspectors of Ontario

Canadian Institute of Public
Health Inspectors (Ontario Branch)

Community Health Nurses' Initiatives
Group (RNAO)

Health Promotion Ontario:
Public Health

Ontario Association of Public Health
Dentistry

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Ontario Society of Nutrition
Professionals in Public Health

Public Health Research, Education
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Charitable Registration
Number 11924 8771 RR0001

December 11, 2001

**To: Hon. John Baird
Minister of Community and Social Services**

Dear Minister Baird:

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Public Health Association to express grave concern about the recent announcement of the potential child-care cuts.

The Ontario Public Health Association is a provincial voluntary association of individuals and constituent societies from various sectors and disciplines in Ontario who promote the health of the public. One of our priorities is the promotion of child health outcomes. We recognize that there is a strong connection between the early years of child development, learning and health outcomes. The Early Years Study, 1999 recommended that there be a strong commitment by the Ontario government to make the promotion of early childhood development a high public priority.

Regulated publicly funded child-care is a vital service that promotes and supports the development of young children in Ontario, particularly for the most vulnerable. Research has shown that there is a strong association between child poverty, lack of access to regulated child care and poor health outcomes. In Ontario, one in five children live below the poverty line. By reducing government funding to the child care sector, those families with young children most in need of support and assistance will be denied the opportunity to access licensed child-care programs. For these children regulated child-care may be their primary source of stimulation that enables them to reach their full developmental potential. Without child-care these children will likely experience negative health outcomes.

We strongly recommend that any decision to reduce government funding to regulated child-care programs be rescinded. More funding, not less, is needed to support access to and services provided by regulated child-care programs.

Sincerely,

Connie Uetrecht
President, OPHA Board of Directors