



Ontario Public Health Association
l'Association pour la santé publique de l'Ontario
Established/Etabli 1949

The mission of OPHA is to provide leadership on issues affecting the public's health and to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario.

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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

Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals
in Public Health

Public Health Research, Education and
Development (PHRED) Program

Charitable Registration
Number 11924 8771 RR0001

December 29th, 2006

Hon. George Smitherman
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
80 Grosvenor St.
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Smitherman,

On behalf of the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), I would like to congratulate you on the recent introduction of the *Health System Improvements Act, 2006*. In particular, the OPHA is pleased to see those parts of the proposed legislation dealing with improvements to public health, especially the formation of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (OAHPP). The OPHA is a voluntary, non-profit charitable organization of individuals and ten Constituent Societies from various sectors and disciplines that have an interest in improving the health of the people of Ontario.

We believe that the new Agency will provide valuable scientific and technical support to those who work in public health throughout the province, as well as providing the public with the reassurance that, in the event of an emergency such as a localized outbreak or pandemic influenza, Ontario is prepared and able to act to safeguard the health of the residents of Ontario.

We are, as well, pleased that the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines review is underway. We also eagerly await the implementation of the recommendations contained in the final report of the Capacity Review Committee (CRC). These recommendations, including a comprehensive human resources strategy, strengthened accountability and governance, and a framework for stable and ongoing public health funding, are certain to improve the entire system of public health and afford those who work within the system with the tools necessary to provide the services so necessary to the people of this province. In particular, the CRC report recommended as its top priority:

- Development of a provincial public health human resources strategy, beginning with the marketing initiative, centralized workforce database, and efforts to increase enrollment in public health programs, including support for more training positions for public health physicians and dentists.

The shortage of professionals in all areas of public health is of grave concern, and OPHA strongly supports this recommendation. We are keenly aware of the need for a marketing strategy and for expanded supports for those in the public health workforce, including training and professional development. This is but one of several important recommendations that must be implemented by your government in order to move public health forward.

We look forward to working with your Ministry and with local public health units and other stakeholders on these key initiatives.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Garry Aslanyan
President

c.c. Premier Dalton McGuinty
Dr. George Pasut