



Addendum to the Health & Social Services Committee Agenda

Council Chambers
Regional Headquarters Building
605 Rossland Road East, Whitby

Thursday, May 9, 2019

9:30 AM

6. Health

6.1 Correspondence

- A) Correspondence dated May 3, 2019 from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHa) regarding Modernizing Ontario's Health Units

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Recommendation: For Endorsement

alPHa's members are
the public health units
in Ontario.

alPHa Sections:

Boards of Health
Section

Council of Ontario
Medical Officers of
Health (COMOH)

**Affiliate
Organizations:**

Association of Ontario
Public Health Business
Administrators

Association of
Public Health
Epidemiologists
in Ontario

Association of
Supervisors of Public
Health Inspectors of
Ontario

Health Promotion
Ontario

Ontario Association of
Public Health Dentistry

Ontario Association of
Public Health Nursing
Leaders

Ontario Dietitians in
Public Health

May 3, 2019

Hon. Christine Elliott
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Flr, 80 Grosvenor St,
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Elliott,

Re: Modernizing Ontario's Health Units

On behalf of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) and its member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations, I am writing today to seek clarity on several aspects of the government's proposed steps towards reorganizing public health in Ontario, as announced in the 2019 Ontario Budget.

We are supportive of focusing on Ontario's residents, broader municipal engagement, more efficient service delivery, better alignments with the health care system, improved staff recruitment and retention, and improved public health promotion and prevention. We are ready and willing to assist you in meeting those goals, but in order to do so, we will need to be equipped with more information.

Our most immediate concern is related to public health funding. We appreciated receiving the memo from the Chief Medical Officer of Health on April 29th, which outlined the changes to the cost-sharing arrangement over the next three years. While this change is characterized as gradual, the municipalities' share of the cost of public health funding envelope will increase to varying degrees, effective immediately. Given that local budgets have already been set for the year, this will represent an unforeseen additional expense that will be difficult to absorb. Additionally, we have concerns about the decision to implement this change prior to finalizing the new public health governance structure that will ultimately be responsible for it. We are therefore looking forward to our upcoming calls with the Chief Medical Officer of Health for more specific and detailed descriptions of the Province's plans to ensure that any immediate local shortfalls are covered and that the total investment in local public health does not decrease over time.

We would also welcome the opportunity to draw on the wealth of expertise that currently exists within local public health to provide informed advice on the proposed replacement of Ontario's 35 public health units with 10 regional entities governed by new boards under a common governance model. We believe that our input will be vital to ensuring that all governance and operational aspects of the proposed transition are considered and that it can be achieved effectively and on time.

From a system standpoint, we eagerly anticipate more details about the plans to "streamline the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion to enable greater flexibility with respect to non-critical standards based on community priorities." Also known as Public Health Ontario, this agency is an essential partner to local public health and a most valuable resource for making the evidence-based decisions that are at the root of efficient and effective public health practice.

Finally, we would welcome a conversation about the status of the recently modernized Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), Protocols, and Guidelines within the Government's vision of a modernized public health system. For over three decades, population health in Ontario has benefitted from detailed mandatory health programs and services as itemized in Sections 5 through 9 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, which include the enabling authority for the OPHS. Taken together, these form a comprehensive blueprint for addressing the public health needs of every Ontarian in every community. If changes are being considered, it is imperative that these be communicated and subject to inclusive and reciprocal stakeholder consultation.

We support modernizing the public health system in a way that improves population health. We find that the magnitude of the changes being proposed and achieving this within less than one year exceptionally ambitious given the intricacies of public health services and their deliberate and appropriate variation among communities. The pace and breadth of these changes will cause significant disruptions in every facet of the public health system. It is essential that attendant risks are mitigated, and Ontario's front-line public health professionals continue to have the local and provincial support that they require to carry out their essential duties to keep Ontarians healthy during this time of transition.

We also acknowledge the important contributions that such modernization can make to ensuring the province's fiscal health by identifying efficiencies and, more importantly, keeping Ontarians healthy. We look forward to learning more from the discussions that the Chief Medical Officer of Health has scheduled with each of Ontario's Boards of Health.

As the organization that represents the public health system's Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations, we would like to request a meeting with you to discuss opportunities for input into the design and implementation of these changes. To schedule a meeting, please contact aPHa Executive Director, Loretta Ryan, at loretta@alphaweb.org or 647-325-9594.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Robert Kyle,
aPHa President

COPY: Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Peter Donnelly, President and CEO, Public Health Ontario
Pat Vanini, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Chris Murray, City Manager for Toronto