

TITLE: Sustainable Funding for Local Public Health in Ontario

SPONSOR: Peterborough Public Health

WHEREAS it is widely recognized that public health interventions save lives and represent a significant return on investment and the goal of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is a sustainable publicly funded health system that is based on helping people stay healthy, delivering good care when people need it, and protecting the health system for future generations; and

WHEREAS the operation of boards of health (or local public health agencies) is governed by the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) which requires the obligated municipalities to pay all related expenses and the Minister of Health to, under Section 76, “make grants for the purposes of this Act on such conditions as he or she considers appropriate”, which since 2007, has been by policy defined at a ratio of 75:25 (provincial/municipal); and

WHEREAS provincial funding for local public health in Ontario is achieved through a combination of cost-shared (Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) Grants and Municipal/First Nations contributions) and 100% Ministry (MOHLTC, Ministry of Child and Youth Services, Ministry of Community and Social Services) programs so that the cost-shared annual operating budget comprises a significant amount of the overall local public health budgets; and

WHEREAS the funding challenges faced by local public health in recent years has included:

- a lack of annual increases (which has led to increased proportional funding from local partners and decreased provincial shares);
- insufficient ongoing provincial funding to fully implement both cost-shared and 100% provincially funded programs;
- application of a funding formula that has not been validated and lacks support from the field;
- funding approvals provided late in the fiscal year; and

WHEREAS that as funding shortfalls have grown, boards of health have been forced to reduce staffing levels and been unable to fulfill program requirements, despite the recent revision of program standards to provide a greater level of flexibility at the local level, putting communities at an increased risk of losing services and not achieving desired public health outcomes;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Local Public Health Agencies’ (alPHa) board and staff will make the long-term sustainable provincial funding for local boards of health a priority for advocacy and strategy development for its members, specifically that the following elements be addressed:

- alPHa continue to advocate for adequate levels of funding for all public health programs and a minimum commitment for a 75% provincial proportion for cost-shared programs to ensure the needs for the effective and optimal delivery of evidence informed and legislated interventions and services to promote or protect local public health are sustained;
- alPHa engage with other strategic and provincial partners, such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the City of Toronto, the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), the Association of Ontario Health Centres (AOHC) etc. to develop, implement, sustain and update as required an ongoing provincial campaign to identify and secure the real resource needs for an optimal local public health system in Ontario; and
- alPHa commission and share a position paper that explores, researches and reports on the evidence to support the local governance and delivery of public health services and the true funding requirements to ensure all communities, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit, whether in partnership with existing boards of health or in alternate models, are able to benefit fully from what public health has to offer.

ACTION FROM CONFERENCE:

Resolution CARRIED AS AMENDED