

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

February 28, 2018

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

Dear Minister Jaczek,

Re: Engagement with the Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health

On behalf of the Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health (COMOH), a section of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa), please accept my congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for Ontario. Ontario's Medical and Associate Medical Officers of Health very much look forward to working with you and supporting you in this new role.

Although we are aware that you have great familiarity with COMOH and with local public health, we would like to follow up on the alPHa letter that you would have received recently to request a meeting to review with you the specific COMOH perspectives on a number of key public health issues.

Investing upstream in public health arguably has never been more important. Our communities are facing mounting pressures related to opioids and other drugs, mental health, climate change, infection prevention and control issues, aging populations and more. Further, the need to address growing health inequities (including working with Indigenous populations) is critical and the public health role in championing this work was highlighted in the just-released 2016 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and is now embedded in the revised Ontario Public Health Standards.

In this dynamic context, we highlight with some urgency the fact that local boards of health are facing significant financial pressures. These pressures are particularly acute and relate to the now three-year funding freeze experienced by most boards of health combined with the new and increased expectations on us and the growing needs of our local communities as referenced above.

In response to these pressures, I am pleased to share that COMOH recently gathered to explore issues related to the sustainability of Ontario's public health system. Our desire is to be solution-oriented and pursue local and regional innovative solutions to preserve and reinforce the important contributions we make to Ontarians' health. We are keen to pursue our collective interest in this continuous quality improvement work and to share our thinking with you.

In closing, Minister, please accept our congratulations to you on your new appointment and our desire to support your work for Ontarians' health. Your prior leadership in public health and in Ontario's poverty reduction strategies provide an important broad perspective on health and its determinants that will serve our province well.

We look forward to hearing from you and to scheduling a meeting. Gordon Fleming can be reached at gordon@alphaweb.org to coordinate calendars.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Penny Sutcliffe', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr. Penny Sutcliffe,
Chair, Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health

COPY: Hon. Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario
Dr. Bob Bell, Deputy Minister, Health and Long-Term Care
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Roselle Martino, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health and Long-Term Care, Population and Public Health Division
Carmen McGregor, alPHa President
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies