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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

August 2, 2018

Hon. Lisa MacLeod
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
14th Floor, 56 Wellesley St W
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9
lisa.macleod@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister MacLeod,

Re: alPHa Resolution A15-4, Public Health Support for a Basic Income Guarantee

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 to express our disappointment with the decision to cancel Ontario's Basic Income Pilot (OBIP).

This project was carefully designed, limited in time and scope and not significantly costlier than the payments that Ontario Works (OW) or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) would have transferred to those enrolled. It was based on a detailed and well-researched proposal authored by Senator Hugh Segal, which was in turn subject to a broad consultation that received input from over 35,000 Ontarians as well as support from each of the province's major political parties.

Its aim was to investigate the potential for a basic income to improve the income security of vulnerable Ontarians and increase their chances of breaking the cycle of poverty. It was also designed to permit the evaluation of the potential of such an initiative as a simpler and more economically effective form of social assistance than the current OW and ODSP model.

In addition to this, the pilot was intended to measure outcomes in areas such as food insecurity, stress and anxiety, mental health, health and healthcare usage, housing stability, education and training and employment and labour market participation. These are all key determinants of health and are therefore at the root of public health's interest in and strong support of the OBIP.

There is consistent evidence that health outcomes improve as income rises. Lower income people are at far greater risk from a range of preventable medical conditions, including cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and mental illness. We therefore believe that improving incomes is an exceptionally effective public health intervention that also contributes to reducing the burden on Ontario's health care system.

The OBIP is an innovative approach to income security that should be allowed to reach its conclusion so that the evidence can be gathered, analyzed and interpreted to evaluate it against its stated objectives. We ask that you reconsider the decision to cancel the program.

aPHa's 2015 resolution in support of the concept of basic income is attached, and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you and to inform any review of social assistance that your government might undertake. Please contact Loretta Ryan (loretta@alphaweb.org or 647-325-9594), should you be receptive to such a meeting.

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert Kyle
aPHa President

COPY: Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Health and Long-Term Care
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Roselle Martino, Assistant Deputy Minister, Population and Public Health Branch (Health and Long-Term Care)
Dr. Christopher Mackie, Chair, Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health
Trudy Sachowski, Chair, Boards of Health

ENCL.

TITLE: Public Health Support for a Basic Income Guarantee

SPONSOR: Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

WHEREAS low income, and high-income inequality, have well-established, strong relationships with a range of adverse health outcomes; and

WHEREAS 1,745,900 Ontarians, or 13.9% of the population, live in low income according to the 2011 National Household Survey after-tax low-income measure; and

WHEREAS income inequality continues to increase in Ontario and Canada; and

WHEREAS current income security programs by provincial and federal governments have not proved sufficient to ensure adequate, secure income for all; and

WHEREAS a basic income guarantee – a cash transfer from government to citizens not tied to labour market participation - ensures everyone an income sufficient to meet basic needs and live with dignity, regardless of work status; and

WHEREAS basic income resembles income guarantees currently provided in Canada for seniors and children, which have contributed to health improvements in those age groups; and

WHEREAS there was an encouraging pilot project of basic income for working age adults conducted jointly by the Government of Manitoba and the Government of Canada in Dauphin, Manitoba in the 1970s, which demonstrated several improved health and educational outcomes; and

WHEREAS a basic income guarantee can reduce poverty and income insecurity, and enable people to pursue educational, occupational, social and health opportunities relevant to them and their family; and

WHEREAS the idea of a basic income guarantee has garnered expressions of support from the Canadian Medical Association and the Alberta Public Health Association as a means of improving health and food security for low income Canadians; and

WHEREAS there is momentum growing across Canada from various sectors and political backgrounds for a basic income guarantee;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) endorse the concept of a basic income guarantee;

AND FURTHER that alPHa request that the federal Ministers of Employment and Social Development, Labour, and Health, as well as the Ontario Ministers Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Seniors, Labour, Children and Youth Services, and Health and Long-Term Care, prioritize joint federal-provincial consideration and investigation into a basic income guarantee, as a policy option for reducing poverty and income insecurity and for providing opportunities for those in low income;

AND FURTHER that the Prime Minister, the Premier of Ontario, the Chief Public Health Officer, the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Ontario Public Health Association, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario be so advised.