

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

August 7, 2018

Hon. Laurie Scott
Minister of Labour
14th Floor, 400 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1T7

Dear Minister Scott,

Re: alPHa Resolution – Minimum Wage as a Living Wage

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 inform you of the following resolution, which was passed at our annual business meeting on June 11, 2018 and directed to your Ministry.

A18-2 - Public Health Support for a Minimum Wage that is a Living Wage

There is no longer any question that income insecurity and poverty are strongly linked to poor health outcomes. Low-income people are at measurably higher risk of preventable illness and premature death owing to the inability to meet the costs of basic living needs such as adequate and nutritious food, affordable shelter, clothing, and a host of other goods and services that are requirements for most Ontarians. Given the 2015 census estimate that nearly 2 million Ontarians are living on low-income, it is clear that a significant proportion of us are at high risk of poor health. Our members are therefore calling on the Government of Ontario to adopt a living wage perspective when setting minimum wage rates to increase income security and improve health.

We hope that your Ministry will consider this request, as we believe that it will contribute to the improvement of health and wellbeing of all Ontarians as well as to the long-term economic prosperity of the province. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our resolution with you. To schedule a meeting, please have your staff contact Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, alPHa, at loretta@alphaweb.org or 647-325-9594

Yours sincerely



Dr. Robert Kyle,
alPHa President

COPY: Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Roselle Martino, Assistant Deputy Minister, Population and Public Health Division
(Health and Long-Term Care)
Pegeen Walsh, Executive Director, Ontario Public Health Association
Tom Cooper, Coordinator, Ontario Living Wage Network
Paul Born, CEO, Tamarack Institute (Living Wage Canada Network)

alPHa RESOLUTION A18-2

TITLE: Public Health Support for a Minimum Wage that is a Living Wage

SPONSOR: Peterborough Public Health

WHEREAS low income Ontarians are at higher risk of premature death and more likely to suffer more illnesses, even after controlling for factors including age, sex, race, smoking status, and place of residence; and

WHEREAS high income inequality leads to increased social problems, and poorer health of the population as a whole; and

WHEREAS based on the Canadian census Low-Income Measure, after tax (LIM-AT), the low-income rate in Ontario grew from 12.9% to 14.4% from 2005 to 2015, totalling 1,898,975 Ontarians living on low income; and

WHEREAS in contrast with other provinces where recent economic growth and average income increases grossly translated to gains for most families, income inequality in Ontario continues to grow; and

WHEREAS approximately one-third of Ontario workers earned less than \$15 an hour in 2016, a rate lower than the calculated living wage in 2016 for the majority of communities throughout the province; and

WHEREAS nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers in Ontario are adults supporting themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS there is an increasing trend for workers to be employed in precarious jobs with low wages, no benefits, and uncertainty in hours (scheduling) and tenure (longevity in position); and

WHEREAS recent legislative changes to minimum wage in Ontario (Bill 148) present a step in the right direction, current wage adjustments will not reach a level required to meet basic living needs in most Ontario communities; and

WHEREAS a living wage outlines the hourly rate at which a household, based on a family of four, can meet its basic needs based on the actual costs of living in a community, after factoring in both government transfers to families and deductions; and

WHEREAS a living wage affords individuals and families the opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty and provides a basic level of economic security; and

WHEREAS a living wage not only promotes a reduction in poverty, decreased income insecurity and improved health at individual and family levels, evidence also supports fiscal benefits to government and the economy; and

WHEREAS the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23, Section 3 states: “Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity...”, a living wage transcends simple public policy and addresses principles of justice and basic human rights;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA) endorse the principles encompassed in a living wage;

AND FURTHER that ALPHA request that the provincial Government consider adopting a living wage perspective when setting future minimum wage rates to ensure that it covers the actual costs of living in most Ontario communities, as a way to reduce poverty and income insecurity and promote the health of Ontarians;

AND FURTHER that the Premier of Ontario, the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, the Ontario Public Health Association, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Living Wage Network and Living Wage Canada be so advised.

ACTION FROM CONFERENCE: Resolution CARRIED