

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

March 12, 2025

Mayor Robin Jones, President
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
155 University Ave., Suite 800
Toronto, Ontario M5H 3B7

Dear Mayor Jones:

RE: Underhousing and Homelessness

On behalf of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA) and its Boards of Health Section, Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health Section, and our Affiliate organizations, I am writing to you with many thanks as well as to highlight where our current advocacy work aligns.

I would like to first thank you for the warm and productive discussion we had at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Conference on Sunday, January 18, 2025, with Loretta Ryan, Chief Executive Officer, alPHA and your staff. We know how busy the ROMA conference would have been, and it is genuinely appreciated that you made time for this meeting. We would also like to thank you for your welcoming remarks at the alPHA Winter Symposium on Friday, February 14, 2025. These were well-received and resonated well with alPHA's members.

Congratulations to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) on the release of the report: *Municipalities Under Pressure: The Human and Financial Costs of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis*. It is a well-researched compelling report that received a great degree of positive press, and we have distributed these to the alPHA membership via our monthly newsletter, *Information Break*. alPHA shares AMO's vision where homelessness is rare, brief, non-recurring, and achievable through targeted investments in sustainable solutions. AMO staff made an excellent presentation on this report at the Board of Health section session at alPHA's Winter Symposium's on February 14th.

alPHA reaffirms its steadfast support for multisectoral strategies aimed at addressing underhousing and homelessness in Ontario. AMO's paper aligns with our perspective on the matter, as well as with the specific recommendations set forth in our Resolution - [Resolution A23-4 - Ending Underhousing and Homelessness in Ontario](#) (attached), that itself was based on AMO's 2023 *Call to Action on Housing and Homelessness*.

In this Resolution, our members formally recognized underhousing and homelessness as a public health crisis impacting all regions of Ontario and emphasizing public health's role in contributing to a broad range of housing, social services, and health solutions through collaboration with multiple stakeholders. In our Resolution, we respectfully urged the provincial government to consider the following actions:

- **Acknowledge** that housing is both a social determinant of health and a fundamental human right.
- **Recognize** that homelessness in Ontario is a complex social, economic, and health crisis.
- **Commit** to the goal of ending underhousing and homelessness in Ontario.

- **Collaborate** with alPHA, AMO, and a wide range of community, health, Indigenous, and economic partners to develop, resource, and implement an actionable plan to achieve this objective.

alPHA continues to value AMO and alPHA's long-standing close relationship and remains committed to working alongside AMO, the municipal sector and our other key partners, to address this pressing issue in a holistic and sustainable manner. We look forward to our continued collaboration to foster a strong, sustainable, resilient, and locally based public health system in Ontario. For further information, please have your staff contact Loretta Ryan, Chief Executive Officer, alPHA, at loretta@alphaweb.org or 416-595-0006, x222.

Best regards,



Trudy Sachowski
Chair, Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)

Encl.

The Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA) is a not-for-profit organization that provides leadership to Ontario's boards of health. alPHA represents all of Ontario's boards of health, medical officers and associate medical officers of health, and senior public health managers in each of the public health disciplines – nursing, inspections, nutrition, dentistry, health promotion, epidemiology, and business administration. As public health leaders, alPHA advises and lends expertise to members on the governance, administration, and management of health units. The Association also collaborates with governments and other health organizations, advocating for a strong, effective, and efficient public health system in the province. Through policy analysis, discussion, collaboration, and advocacy, alPHA's members and staff act to promote public health policies that form a strong foundation for the improvement of health promotion and protection, disease prevention and surveillance services in all of Ontario's communities.

RESOLUTION A23-04

TITLE: Ending Underhousing and Homelessness in Ontario

SPONSOR: alPHa Boards of Health Section

WHEREAS housing is recognized as a human right in Canada under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ¹; and

WHEREAS the goal of Public Health is to reduce health inequities and improve the health of the whole population; and

WHEREAS housing is widely accepted as a key determinant of health, with the health of a population directly linked with the availability of adequate, affordable housing; and

WHEREAS the negative impacts of housing insecurity and homelessness include poor mental health, higher risk of infectious diseases, higher risk of chronic diseases, and higher risk of injuries among others ²; and

WHEREAS ending underhousing and homelessness requires a range of housing, social service, and health solutions from a range of stakeholders; and

WHEREAS leadership and urgent action is needed from the provincial government on an emergency basis to develop, resource, and implement a comprehensive plan to prevent, reduce and ultimately end underhousing and homelessness in Ontario; and

WHEREAS The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, a strategic partner of alPHa has asked that their partners support their *Call to Action on Housing and Homelessness*;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT alPHa support AMO's *Call to Action on Housing and Homelessness*;

AND FURTHER THAT alPHa call on the Provincial Government to:

- acknowledge that housing is a social determinant of health and a human right.
- acknowledge that homelessness in Ontario is a social, economic, and health crisis.
- commit to the goal of ending underhousing and homelessness in Ontario.
- work with alPHa, AMO and a broad range of community, health, Indigenous and economic partners to develop, resource, and implement an action plan to achieve this goal.

AND FURTHER THAT the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ministers of Health; Municipal Affairs and Housing; Ministry of Finance; the Premier's office; relevant ministries of the Federal Government; and Children, Community and Social Services be so advised.

¹ Third report of Canada, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights : article 11 : housing : background report, <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.847859/publication.html>, retrieved April 20, 2023

² Public Health Ontario Evidence Brief: Homelessness and Health Outcomes: What are the associations? <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/E/2019/eb-homelessness-health.pdf>