September 27, 2019

The Honorable Todd Smith
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Hepburn Block
6th Floor, 80 Grosvenor St.
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Smith:

Changes to Provincial Autism Supports

On behalf of the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health we are writing to you in support of a letter from Peterborough Public Health where they received a delegation at their June 12, 2019 Board of Health meeting who provided a detailed presentation of the planned changes to the Ontario Autism Program.

The Windsor-Essex County Board of Health supports the province’s plan to address long waiting lists and to expand Ontario’s five autism diagnostic hubs.

Children on the waitlist will transition to Childhood Budgets with direct funding that will include behavioural services, including assessments and consultations, speech language pathology, occupational therapy and physiotherapy as well as family/caregiver capacity building and training, respite services, technology aids and travel.

We also share Peterborough Public Health’s concern that through these changes funding will be provided directly to families rather than towards a provision of evidence-based programs. We also believe that amounts should be based on a child’s need and not their age. Children with autism benefit from appropriate interventions from qualified practitioners (i.e. needs-based supports).

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit supports the above recommendation, and thanks you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gary McNamara, Chair
Chair, Board of Health

Theresa Marentette
Chief Executive Officer

c:  Premier Doug Ford
    Hon. Steven Lecce, Minister of Education
    Loretta Ryan, Association of Local Public Health Units
    WECHU Board of Health
    Margaret Spoelstra, Co-Chair, Ontario Autism Advisory Panel
    Corporation of the City of Windsor – Clerk’s office
    Local MP’s – Brian Masse, Cheryl Hardcastle, Tracy Ramsey

Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health
Ontario Boards of Health
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, MOHLTC
Council of Medical Officers of Health (COMOH)
Dr. Marie Bountrogianni, Co-Chair, Ontario Autism Advisory Panel
Corporation of the County of Essex – Clerk’s office
Local MPP’s – Percy Hatfield, Lisa Gretzky, Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls