March 6, 2019

Honourable Christine Elliott, Minister, Deputy Premier
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
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Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister
Ministry of Education
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Honourable Lisa MacLeod, Minister
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
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Honourable Ministers Elliott, MacLeod and Thompson,

On February 28, 2019, the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health passed a resolution in support of the
Children Count Task Force Recommendations.

Whereas, boards of health are required under the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) to collect and
analyze health data for child and youth to monitor trends overtime, and

Whereas, boards of health require local population health data for planning evidence-informed, culturally
and locally appropriate health services and programs, and

Whereas, addressing child and youth health and well-being is a priority across multiple sectors, including
education and health, and

Whereas, Ontario lacks a single coordinated system for the monitoring and assessment of child and youth
health and well-being, and

Whereas, there is insufficient data on child and youth health and well-being at the local, regional and
provincial level, and

Whereas, the Children Count Task Force recommendations build upon years of previous work and
recommendations, identifying gaps and priorities for improving data on child and youth health and
wellbeing,
Now therefore be it resolved that the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health receives and endorses the recommendations of the Children Count Task Force, and

FURTHER THAT, the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health urges the provincial government to take steps to improve the ways in which population health data for children and youth is currently collected and reported in Ontario.

We would be pleased to discuss this resolution with you and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gary McNamara      Theresa Marentette
Chair, Board of Health      Chief Executive Officer


https://www.wechu.org/reports/children-count-provincial-task-force-recommendations

cc:  Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Local MPP’s
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)
Ontario Boards of Health
Windsor-Essex County Boards of Education
Association of Public Health Epidemiologists of Ontario (Apheo)
Windsor-Essex Board of Health
Children Count Task Force Members
Ontario needs a coordinated and cost-effective system for measuring the health and well-being of children and youth. Such a system will enable stakeholders at all levels (local, regional and provincial) to effectively measure the health and well-being of our kids, and in turn, the return on investment in relevant programs.

Without a coordinated assessment and monitoring system in Ontario, the ability to inform public health planning for child and youth well-being at the local level is hindered. Monitoring, often referred to as ‘surveillance’ in the public health field, includes the systematic collection and analysis of health data for the purpose of planning, implementing and evaluating effective public health programs in local communities. In order to appropriately understand health behaviours of children and youth that influence well-being, and to properly measure health program investments over time, good quality assessment and monitoring data are needed at local levels. Good quality data are accessible, reliable, accurate, consistent and comparable. In particular, it is important that sample sizes are large enough and representative enough to allow for valid analysis at local levels, ensure ethical standards for privacy and to draw solid conclusions to inform decision making.

Based on the recommendation of the Children Count Report, a provincial task force of key stakeholders was convened in the spring of 2017. This task force included representation from boards of education, local public health units, government, researchers, and non-governmental organizations in Ontario. The aim of the task force was to identify next steps for improving assessment and monitoring of child and youth health and well-being in Ontario. The following recommendations of the Children Count Task Force represent next steps and actions needed to coordinate and connect the current data collection systems that exist in Ontario.

OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATION

Create a secretariat responsible for overseeing the implementation of the systems, tools and resources required to improve the monitoring of child and youth health and well-being. The secretariat shall be so enabled to:

1. Guide the implementation of the five recommendations of the task force that are contained in this report.
2. Develop a process to ensure that assessment and monitoring systems remain effective and relevant over time by addressing emerging issues and data gaps.
RECOMMENDATION 1
Suggested Lead Ministries: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Supporting Ministry: Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Create an interactive web-based registry of database profiles resulting from child and youth health and well-being data collection in Ontario schools.

RECOMMENDATION 2
Suggested Lead Ministry: Ministry of Education
Supporting Ministries: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Mandate the use of a standardized School Climate Survey template and a coordinated process across Ontario.

RECOMMENDATION 3
Suggested Lead Ministries: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Supporting Ministry: Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Develop and formalize knowledge exchange practices through the use of centrally coordinated data sharing agreements.

RECOMMENDATION 4
Suggested Lead Ministry: Ministry of Education
Supporting Ministries: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Develop and implement a centralized research ethics review process to support research activities in Ontario school boards.

RECOMMENDATION 5
Suggested Lead Ministries: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Education
Supporting Ministry: Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Work with the Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC) of Ontario to develop a guideline for the interpretation of privacy legislation related to student health and well-being monitoring data collection in schools.

For a complete list of recommendations and their associated actions see the full report at www.wechu.org/reports/lhcp-task-force-recommendation.

THE CHILDREN COUNT TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL LEAD TO:

Better Data
More Efficient Data Collection
Reduced Costs
Healthier Children and Youth

For more information please contact: ChildrenCount@wechu.org