October 13, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., MP
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., MP
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Finance
Privy Council Office
Room 1000
80 Sparks Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A3

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Deputy Minister and Minister of Finance:

Re: Basic Income for Income Security during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

At its meeting on September 17, 2020, the Board of Health carried the following resolution #20-20:

THAT the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts endorse correspondence from Ontario boards of health recommending the evolution of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) into a basic income for all Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

AND FURTHER THAT relevant individuals and organizations be apprised of this motion and supporting materials.
Income alone is the single strongest predictor of health, and health improves at every step up the income ladder.\(^1\)\(^{ii}\) Populations living in low income are disproportionately affected by virtually all physical and mental health problems and challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified income inequities that already exist and has increased the level and depth of poverty across the country.

Public Health Sudbury & Districts has a long-standing commitment to health equity and poverty reduction efforts including previous advocacy in support of a basic income guarantee. Given the devastating financial impacts of COVID-19 on priority populations, Public Health Sudbury & Districts is reconfirming its support for basic income as a long-term policy option for poverty reduction for all Canadians, during the pandemic and beyond. Therefore, we urge your government explore the implementation of a basic income as the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit comes to an end as a viable option for reducing poverty and improving health.

Sincerely,

Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

cc: Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
    Honourable C. Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
    Dr. D. Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ministry of Health
    All Ontario Boards of Health
