Ontario 2015 Visioning Exercise

December 6, 2001

In an exercise called Ontario 2015, the provincial PC Party has been meeting with individuals and organizations across the province to ask people how they envision Ontario in the year 2015. The Party’s goal is to speak with as many Ontarians as possible. As representatives of public health, the alPHa Board of Directors accepted an invitation to participate in one of these consultation sessions. In keeping with its open policy to meet with political parties of all stripes, the Board viewed the invitation as an opportunity to shape public policy and influence decision-making by expressing its ideal vision for Ontario 2015. A meeting was held on November 15, 2001 in Toronto with PC Party Vice President Blair McCreadie and nine members of the alPHa board. Two staff members from the Association also attended. The following is a summary of the discussion and comments from that meeting.

Process for Ontario 2015

The three phases to Ontario 2015 were described:

- Phase 1 – Values and Principles, i.e. identifying the principles and values of the PC Party
- Phase 2 – Destinations, i.e. identifying what Ontarians want for the province in 2015 and what is needed (phase completed October 2001)
- Phase 3 – identifying how to get to where Ontarians want to be in 2015 (phase to be completed June 2002)

Two handouts, 2015: Themes and Sample Bold Statements and Destination Themes, were distributed for the Board’s information.

Public Health’s Position

Before the brainstorming began, the alPHa Board expressed its position and assumptions to Mr. McCreadie.

Public health cuts across all facets of human development and life. It promotes and protects health, and prevents disease. Public health delivers programs and services that are prevention-oriented and reduces usage of hospitals and the need for physician care. A good public health system would allow the province to reach the ten destinations (freedom, responsibility, community, pride, harmony, value, security, opportunity, excellence and prosperity) that the PC Party have defined as where Ontarians want to be in 2015.

However, public health is traditionally underfunded in this province and in the country, in general. The unlikelihood of financial support for alPHa, the organization that speaks on behalf of the 37 health units of Ontario, by the provincial Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care reflects this reality. Public health believes that the current inadequate funding of the sector will have negative impact in the long-term health of the population.

Public Health’s Goals for Ontario in 2015

Although there were many goals generated, the following were identified by the Board as the most important (in no particular order):
• equity of access for all Ontarians, including First Nations, and facilitating access where necessary

• everyone has adequate health care
• focus on wellness as opposed to treatment
• sufficient resources (financial and human) to do the job of public health

Due to time constraints only one of these goals (focus on wellness vs. treatment) was examined in greater detail.

**Focus on Wellness vs. Treatment**

Solutions to creating a focus on wellness as opposed to treatment within the broader health care sector were identified:

• government reallocation of existing monies to wellness (most important)
• comprehensive tobacco strategy, including reduction
• comprehensive approach to recruit and retain health professionals
• education of public and government about the value of public health programs and services
• the promotion of wellness throughout life, starting at an early age

**Conclusion**

Mr. McCreadie indicated that the Board’s comments would be brought back to the various policy areas, particularly health, within the Party. A full report on the consultations and their outcomes will be produced by the Party in the future.

As your Association, alPHa is working hard representing and advocating for Health Units and Boards of Health while advancing the role of public health.

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