September 27, 2018

The Honourable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and Deputy Premier
80 Grosvenor Street, Floor, Hepburn Block
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Elliott:

RE: Prevention matters: Why Ontario needs a chronic disease prevention strategy

Chronic diseases are the leading causes of disability and death in Ontario and account for the majority of health care costs in the province. The economic impact of the four greatest risk factors for chronic disease (tobacco use, alcohol misuse, unhealthy eating and physical inactivity) is staggering. From 2004 to 2013, Ontario spent more than $89.4 billion on health care costs attributed to these four risk factors. With an aging population, there is a chronic disease tsunami coming towards our health care system. This is simply not an affordable option. It is imperative that we focus our efforts on preventing chronic disease to ensure our health care system is not overwhelmed trying to manage and treat chronic diseases in the future. Investments in chronic disease prevention yield significant returns. In fact, every $1 invested in chronic disease prevention yields an average of $6 in savings in the treatment of chronic disease.

Given the significant impact of chronic diseases on the health and well-being of Ontarians, and the potential for substantial savings from effective prevention efforts, at the KFL&A Board of Health meeting on September 26, 2018, the following recommendation was made:

THAT the KFL&A Board of Health endorse the report Prevention matters: Why Ontario needs a chronic disease prevention strategy, including the recommendations made in this report for chronic disease prevention and send correspondence to:

1) Honourable Christine Elliott, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and Deputy Premier
2) Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
3) Ian Arthur, MPP Kingston and the Island
4) Randy Hillier, MPP Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston
5) Daryl Kramp, MPP Hastings-Lennox and Addington
6) Akanksha Ganguly, Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance
7) Loretta Ryan, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
8) Ontario Boards of Health
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This report recommends the following courses of action for effective chronic disease prevention in Ontario:

1. Invest in a comprehensive provincial chronic disease prevention strategy:
   a) Strengthen policies on creating healthy and sustainable environments that reduce chronic disease risk factors and improve health equity;
   b) Apply a health equity lens to all strategies, policies, programs and interventions to promote health for all;
   c) Support the recommendations outlined in Cancer Care Ontario’s 2015 – 2020 Chronic Disease Prevention Strategy and Path to Prevention to reduce chronic disease, especially among First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples;
   d) Support awareness-building and communication efforts to ensure Ontarians are knowledgeable about chronic disease prevention, healthy lifestyle behaviors and are supportive of government action in these areas; and
   e) Provide dedicated funding for supportive infrastructure (e.g. to create a central database, technical expertise, training and networks).

2. Create a chronic disease prevention council with representatives from government, health, academic and other external groups to provide leadership and advice to government on a chronic disease prevention strategy, including, aligning existing strategies, initiatives and resources and identifying new areas for investment and action.

3. Create an inter-ministerial council to plan and coordinate actions and investments to promote a health-in-all-policies approach across the provincial government.

The KFL&A Board of Health urges the provincial government to move forward with these recommendations to reduce the personal, familial and economic impact of chronic diseases in Ontario.

Yours truly,

Denis Doyle, Chair
KFL&A Board of Health

Copy to: Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
I. Arthur, MPP Kingston and the Island
R. Hillier, MPP Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston
D. Kramp, MPP, Hastings-Lennox & Addington
A. Ganguly, Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance
L. Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health
Board of Health members