September 15, 2022

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
438 University Avenue, 7th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Sent via email to MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca

Dear Honourable Minister Fullerton:

**Re: Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) Funding**

The HBHC program is a required and vital public health program supporting high risk families. The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit remains committed to operationalizing the HBHC program as best possible; however, we are seeking a review of base-funding from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to ensure the program meets the current complex health needs of families and supports expenditures of the program.

At its meeting held on September 15, 2022, the Board of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDHU) carried the following motion:

“THAT the Board of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit endorse the resolution passed by the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts requesting that the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services review base-funding needs for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program to ensure this essential program is sufficiently resourced to meet the current and growing needs of children and a healthy start in life.

AND THAT the Board of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit write directly to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services requesting a review of funding needs for the Healthy Babies Health Children Program.”

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit is concerned that the current base-funding allocated to fully implement the HBHC program is insufficient to meet the expenditures of the program.

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The complex needs of families as we move to the next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic articulates a strong need for the HBHC program, particularly for families living in rural and isolated communities found in the HKPRDHU’s area. The HBHC program has demonstrated positive impacts on family health to increase parenting confidence, knowledge and skills.

In 2000/2001, the province committed to 50 million dollars of HBHC program funding enhancements aimed to improve health outcomes of infants, children, and families. As a result of funding enhancement, the HBHC program at HKPRDHU saw an increase in funds for the program; however, funding has remained stagnant since. Each year the HBHC program at HKPRDHU has extended expenditures beyond base-funding provided by the MCCSS.

To fully implement the HBHC program, the HKPRDHU relies on funding mitigation strategies. With additional pressures associated with renewed collective agreement contracts, travel to rural communities, the education needs of staff to meet the growing complex needs of clients, the need to integrate technology into care, and other operational or administrative needs, the current base funding provided through MCCSS is insufficient to sustain the provision of HBHC programming.

On behalf of the Board of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, I am respectfully requesting your commitment to carefully review base-funding needs for the HBHC program.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Doug Elmslie
Board of Health Chair
Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit

Cc:  Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Dr. Jackie Schleifer Taylor, Chair, Governing Council of Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health  
Sanober Diaz, Executive Director of Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health  
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Ontario Boards of Health

Attachment
June 21, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Government of Ontario
438 University Avenue, 7th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Honourable Minister:

Re: Healthy Babies Healthy Children Funding

The Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts remains wholly committed to the critical Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, however, has longstanding and increasing concerns about the Board’s ability to meet clients’ growing needs with current program funding. Please be advised that at its meeting on June 16, 2022, the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts carried the following resolution #19-22:

THAT the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts request the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to review base-funding needs for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program to ensure this essential program is sufficiently resourced to meet the current and growing needs of children and a healthy start in life.

The Board of Health recognizes that the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) program provides a critical prevention/early intervention program and is designed to ensure that all Ontario families with children (prenatal to age six) who are at risk of physical, cognitive, communicative, and/or psychosocial problems have access to effective, consistent, early intervention services. Since 1997 the province has committed to resourcing the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program at 100%. Unfortunately, the HBHC budget has not been increased since 2015, resulting in significant erosion in capacity due to fixed cost increases such as collective agreement commitments and steps on salary grids, travel and accommodation costs, and operational and administrative costs.

Healthier communities for all.
Mes communautés plus saines pour tous.
This has been further compounded by the increased intensity of need in our communities pre-dating but further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The HBHC program has made every effort to mitigate the effects of the funding shortfalls over the years and to protect programming. The program, however, is not sustainable and significant service reductions will be required without increased to base funding.

It remains our priority to ensure that the HBHC program can effectively identify and support children and families most in need throughout the Sudbury/Manitoulin District. To this effect, we are submitting a revised 2022/23 HBHC program budget based on current needs and requesting consideration by the Ministry staff.

The Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts is respectfully requesting the Minister’s commitment to carefully review base-funding needs for the HBHC program to ensure this essential program is sufficiently resourced to meet the current and growing needs of children and a healthy start in life.

Thank you for your attention to this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

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

cc: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ministry of Health
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health
Dr. Jackie Schleifer Taylor, Chair, Governing Council of Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health
Sanober Diaz, Executive Director of Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health