June 23, 2021

The Honourable Christine Elliott
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
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Dear Minister Elliott,

I want to begin by thanking you and your government for your financial support during the pandemic. Local boards of health have appreciated the province’s commitment to funding, at 100%, the costs related to the COVID response and the mandate to implement the largest mass immunization campaign in Ontario’s history. Your approach has facilitated our ability to serve our local population.

As we move towards summer, we are encouraged by the increase in vaccine coverage, decreased cases and opening of businesses and facilities. However, there is still a lot of work ahead and, if we’ve learned anything from this experience, the end point is never truly predictable.

The impact of your assistance was noted by our Board when we recently approved the audited financial statements for Peterborough Public Health’s 2020 fiscal year. At the same time, we continue to await approval of our 2021 Annual Service Plan - including the provincial cost-shared grant and extraordinary one-time funding for COVID Response and COVID Vaccination. Your anticipated assistance in mitigating costs in 2021 will be critical in allowing us to complete the job of controlling the pandemic.

During the COVID emergency, we have had to make difficult decisions about which program activities to stop, which to continue at reduced capacity, and which to continue without disruption. Post-COVID we will need to rebuild programs, catch up on wait lists and delayed activities, meet new community needs and continue to address the fallout from an intense 21 months of COVID work.

Facing these challenges, I ask that you ensure public health is adequately funded to meet the evolving public health needs of our communities and further ask that you and your officials provide timely clarity regarding what support local public health agencies can anticipate in 2022. Early advice on key funding commitments for 2022 will allow my Board to more effectively manage our 2022 fiscal requirements.

More specifically, our Board would ask that your government consider a commitment to:

1. Continuation of mitigation funding for the 2022 fiscal year;
2. Continuation of the availability of one-time funding for COVID expenses;
3. An increase in the base funding levels to accommodate increased operating costs since 2019; and,
4. Funding to support the enhanced need for “re-starting” or returning programs to OPHS requirement levels.
Local public health agencies, along with their partners, are determined to rebuild community health. This effort cannot be put on the shoulders of local funders alone and we look to a continuing partnership with the government.

Our Board looks forward to working with you and your Ministry as we plan for and implement post-pandemic public health initiatives.

Yours truly,

Original signed by

Mayor Andy Mitchell
Chair, Board of Health

cc: Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Dr. Kieran Moore, Incoming Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health
Dave Smith, MPP Peterborough-Kawartha
David Piccini, MPP Northumberland-Peterborough South
Laurie Scott, MPP Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
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