March 24, 2023

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy  
Minister of Finance  
Frost Building North, 7th Floor  
7 Queen’s Park Cres.  
Toronto, ON M7A 1Y7

Delivered via email  
peter.bethlenfalvy@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Bethlenfalvy,

On behalf of the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health (SWPH), we are writing to express our strong support for the Association of Local Public Health Agencies’ (alPHa) 2023 Pre-Budget Submission. We believe that alPHa's pre-budget submission outlines what is needed with respect to public health investments that are crucial for the health and well-being of communities across Ontario.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of investing in public health infrastructure, and alPHa’s recommendations within its Public Health Resilience in Ontario report, are a critical step in ensuring that Ontario is prepared for future public health emergencies. The Report well articulates the need for investments in public health that are required for ongoing pandemic response, tackling public health’s extensive backlog not unlike the health care system’s ‘surgical backlog’, and restarting extensive programs and services provincially mandated under the Ontario Public Health Standards.

The Ontario Government invested in public health during the most extraordinary emergency response of our lifetime by ensuring we were well-resourced to keep Ontarians safe. For that, we are most appreciative. Our work before the pandemic and after involves the very same principles applied during the pandemic. Protection, promotion, and prevention are the pillars of public health work to ensure every Ontarian has the best opportunity for a healthy life. The return on your government’s public health investment lessens the burden on the health care system tomorrow, next month, next year, and for years to come. Local public health agencies working in collaboration with dozens of partners, are keen to tackle what needs to be done especially after this unprecedented pandemic and the lingering unintended consequences we are left with. To do our best work, we need adequate and sustaining funding to ensure our communities are healthy and economically vibrant.

In conclusion, we strongly support alPHa's 2023 Pre-Budget Submission. Please give this pre-budget submission serious consideration.

Sincerely,

Joe Preston  
Chair, Board of Health  
Southwestern Public Health

Cynthia St. John  
Chief Executive Officer  
Southwestern Public Health

www.swpublichealth.ca
c:  The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier of Ontario and Minister of Health  
Ernie Hardeman, MPP Oxford County  
Rob Flack, MPP Elgin Middlesex London  
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Loretta Ryan, Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Sandra Datars-Bere, CAO, City of St. Thomas  
Ben Addley, CAO, Oxford County  
Julie Gonyou, CAO, County of Elgin