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Providing leadership in public health management

Hon. Margaret Best
Minister of Health Promotion and Sport
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1S5

August 17, 2011

Dear Minister Best:

Re. Resolution A11-3 - Call for Immediate Release of a Comprehensive Tobacco Control Strategy for Ontario

On behalf of member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA) I am writing to introduce alPHA's 2011 Resolution calling for renewed commitment to a Comprehensive Tobacco Strategy for Ontario.

alPHA congratulates the Government of Ontario for recent initiatives that demonstrate a renewed commitment to the renewal of Ontario's Tobacco Control Strategy, including addressing contraband and funding for cessation medications. We are however still awaiting a strong and clear statement that the Government intends to act on all of the recommendations contained in the October 2010 report of the Tobacco Strategy Advisory Group in order to meet its vision of a tobacco – free Ontario by 2030.

We look forward to working with the Government of Ontario to gain further ground in the fight against tobacco, which will contribute to the improvement of health and wellbeing for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Linda Stewart,
Executive Director

Copy: Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health

Encl.

TITLE: Call for Immediate Release of a Comprehensive Tobacco Control Strategy for Ontario

SPONSOR: Peterborough County-City Health Unit

WHEREAS smoking and other forms of tobacco use still remain the single largest cause of preventable disease and contributes to the premature death of Ontarians annually; and

WHEREAS alPHA has, following a 2009 resolution, urged government to commit to the goal of preserving and enhancing reductions in tobacco use, and to this end to reinstate funding to 2008-2009 levels and in addition, enhance funding for comprehensive tobacco control efforts in Ontario; and

WHEREAS the Smoke-Free Ontario Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) submitted its report "Evidence to Guide Action: Comprehensive Tobacco Control in Ontario" to the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (OAHPP) in the Fall of 2010. The report presents a case for continued comprehensive tobacco control in Ontario; and

WHEREAS the SAC report was closely followed by a report from the Tobacco Strategy Advisory Group (TSAG) with the objective to advise the Ministry of Health Promotion & Sport in the development of a five-year plan to renew the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy. The TSAG report concluded that "The government must invest in a sustained and sufficiently intensive comprehensive tobacco control strategy in Ontario at levels required to eliminate the burden of tobacco use rapidly, equitably and cost-effectively"; and

WHEREAS Ontario has an opportunity to build on and expand its achievements obtained since the introduction of the Ontario Tobacco Strategy;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that alPHA urgently request the Premier of Ontario (Dalton McGuinty), the Minister of Health Promotion & Sport (Margarett Best), the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Deb Matthews), the Office of the Attorney General (Chris Bentley), the Minister of Finance (Dwight Duncan), the Minister of Revenue (Sophia Aggelonitis) and the Chief Medical Officer of Health (Arlene King), to demonstrate the entire set of recommendations within the Tobacco Strategy Advisory Group report and announce a renewed, long-term commitment to a comprehensive tobacco control strategy to reduce use and exposure to tobacco products and the illnesses and deaths they cause to Ontario's populations.

ACTION FROM CONFERENCE: Resolution CARRIED AS AMENDED