October 31, 2019

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health  
Hepburn Block 10th Floor  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto ON M7A 1E9

Re: Funding for Leave the Pack Behind

On August 23, 2019 at a regular meeting of the Board for the Grey Bruce Health Unit, the Board considered the attached correspondence from Peterborough Public Health regarding the provincial governments’ decision to cease funding for Leave the Pack Behind. The following motion was passed:

GBHU BOH Motion 2019-67

Moved by: Anne Eadie          Seconded by: Sue Paterson
“THAT, the Board of Health support the correspondence from Peterborough Public Health with respect to Funding for Leave the Pack Behind.”

Carried

Sincerely,

Mitch Twolan
Chair, Board of Health
Grey Bruce Health Unit

Encl.

Cc: The Honourable Michael Tibollo, Associcate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions  
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Bill Walker, MPP Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound  
Lisa Thompson, MPP Huron-Bruce  
Jim Wilson, MPP Simcoe-Grey  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Ontario Health Units
July 17, 2019

The Honourable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4
Sent via e-mail: christine.elliott@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Elliot,

Re: Funding Cancelled for Leave the Pack Behind

At its meeting on June 12, 2019, the Board of Health for Peterborough Public Health had the opportunity to review communication from Leave the Pack Behind, a longstanding provincial partner in tobacco prevention and cessation among young adults. On behalf of the Board of Health, I am writing to express our concern over the provincial governments’ decision to cease funding for Leave the Pack Behind.

Young adults aged 20 - 24 have the highest prevalence of e-cigarette use and other tobacco products like cigars and water pipes, and one of the highest rates of cigarette use in the province.1 Additionally, the transition to daily, regular smoking in Ontario is likely established between the ages of 18 and 21 making cessation and prevention programs for young adults more imperative than ever.2

In Peterborough, both Fleming College and Trent University have smoke-free campus policies that protect students, staff, and visitors from the involuntary exposure to second-hand smoke and vapour. However, the success of these policies depends on a comprehensive approach to commercial tobacco control that includes cessation support for those that want to make a quit attempt.

Working with Leave the Pack Behind staff at both post-secondary institutions has allowed us to engage hundreds of young adults and inspire dozens of quit attempts that otherwise would not have happened without partnerships and collaboration.

It has been widely reported that the Provincial government has pledged to end ‘hallway medicine’ and is committed to balancing the budget. Reinstating the funding of this vital program will help the government meet both of those goals as for every dollar spent on tobacco control, $20 are saved in future health care costs.3,4 Furthermore “there is now a substantial body of evidence showing that the majority of health care expenditures are spent on conditions that are largely preventable.”5

Leave the Pack Behind was part of a ‘no wrong door approach’ that supported young adults with their quit attempts. As “tobacco dependence treatment can have a significant impact on health and be very cost-effective when compared with other health system activities”6 we are urging the Ministry to reconsider the cancelation of this comprehensive and impactful program.
Sincerely,

Original signed by

Councillor Kathryn Wilson
Chair, Board of Health

cc: Hon. Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Local MPPs
Kelli-an Lawrance, PhD, Director & Principal Investigator of Leave the Pack Behind, Brock University
Heather Travis, Manager, Leave the Pack Behind, Brock University
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies

2 https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/14/3/181
3 https://jech.bmj.com/content/jech/71/8/827.full.pdf
4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVZxtuZhN_M