March 28, 2017

The Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Hoskins,

RE: LOW-INCOME DENTAL PROGRAM FOR ADULTS AND SENIORS

On March 17, 2017, the Porcupine Health Unit Board of Health passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Health for the Porcupine Health Unit recognizes the importance of dental health in the overall health and well-being in our population; and

WHEREAS, the Porcupine Health Unit has identified that oral health concerns lead to greater emergency department and day surgery visit rates in our area, than the Provincial average; and

WHEREAS, a 2015 Porcupine Health Unit Study demonstrated that more than a third of emergency department visits for dental concerns are repeat visits, and the highest proportion of repeat visits are in the 19-44 year age group; and

WHEREAS, there is a great cost to both acute health care services and the individual patient from a lack of dental care. Pain, low self-esteem, complications from antibiotic treatment, and infections which may be serious and progress rapidly are all common complications of a lack of dental services; and

WHEREAS, the majority of these acute dental complications are avoidable with proper dental treatment, and the lack of treatment is largely due to an inability to pay for dental services;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Health for the Porcupine Health Unit appreciates the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s plan to address this important public health issue, but encourages consideration for more urgent implementation of expanded public dental programs for those living on low incomes; and

FURTHERMORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Association of Local/Public Health Agencies, Ontario Boards of Health, and Gilles Bisson, MPP, Timmins 1 James Bay.

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

Yours very truly,

Donald W West BMATH, CPA, CA
Chief Administrative Officer

DW:mc