

alPHa's members are
the public health units
in Ontario.

alPHa Sections:

Boards of Health
Section

Council of Ontario
Medical Officers of
Health (COMOH)

**Affiliate
Organizations:**

Association of Ontario
Public Health Business
Administrators

Association of
Public Health
Epidemiologists
in Ontario

Association of
Supervisors of Public
Health Inspectors of
Ontario

Health Promotion
Ontario

Ontario Association of
Public Health Dentistry

Ontario Association of
Public Health Nursing
Leaders

Ontario Dietitians in
Public Health

July 12, 2019

Dr. David Williams,
Chief Medical Officer of Health
21st Flr, 393 University Ave,
Toronto, ON M5G 2M2

Dear Dr. Williams,

Re: Public Health Modernization & Indigenous Engagement.

On behalf of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) and its member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations, I am writing to highlight an aspect of alPHa Resolution A19-12, *Public Health Modernization: Getting it Right* (attached) that we shared with you earlier this summer, namely the call for meaningful participation of First Nations.

As the consultations begin on implementation of the Government's public health modernization plan, consideration needs to be given to a wide array of factors, and we believe that it is important to remind you that these changes will have significant impacts on many of Ontario's Indigenous communities, especially those with a close relationship with the boards of health for the health units within which they are located.

As you are aware, Indigenous people experience the lowest health status of any identifiable population in Ontario and the 2018 Ontario Public Health Standards have made decreasing health inequities in Indigenous communities through the creation of meaningful relationships and collaborative partnerships a requirement of our members.

Many important and productive initiatives have been undertaken by Ontario's boards of health in partnership with local Indigenous communities in this regard, including comprehensive cultural competency training, appointing First Nations representatives to governance structures, engaging in collaborative needs assessments, and formalizing agreements for the direct provision of services.

While there is still much to be done, important gains have been made in the areas of on-reserve public health, fostering culturally sensitive relationships with Indigenous communities and improving their access to culturally considerate public health programs and services. Building on these gains will be essential to the success of a modernized public health system in Ontario and a mechanism for meaningful engagement of Ontario's Indigenous population during the consultations will be required.

Please contact alPHa Executive Director Loretta Ryan at loretta@alphaweb.org or 647-325-9594 should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Carmen McGregor
alPHa President

COPY: Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health

alPHa RESOLUTION A19-12

TITLE: Public Health Modernization: Getting it Right!

SPONSOR: Peterborough Public Health

WHEREAS the services provided by local boards of public health are critical to supporting and improving the health and quality of life of all residents of the Province; and

WHEREAS public health interventions are an important strategy in the prevention of hallway medicine and have been found to produce significant cost-saving with estimates that every dollar invested will save or avert at least \$14 in future costs; and

WHEREAS boards of health are accountable to both the province and their “obligated municipalities” to maximize their financial resources; and

WHEREAS meaningful municipal participation on boards of health ensures that public health agencies understand and respond to local and specific municipal needs; and

WHEREAS revenue opportunities for municipalities are constrained by both the ability to pay and provincial regulation; and

WHEREAS the current proposal for reorganizing the public health sector in Ontario was developed without meaningful consultation with either boards of health or their obligated municipalities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Ontario public health mandate as currently outlined in the Ontario Public Health Standards not be altered or diminished in an effort to achieve budget reduction targets and that the Province continues to financially support public health units to adequately implement the Standards;

AND FURTHER that the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) calls upon the Ontario government to delay the implementation of any organizational and financial changes to local public health until April 1, 2021 with a commitment to engage in meaningful consultation over the next eighteen (18) months;

AND FURTHER that any changes in the cost-shared formula be phased in over five (5) years commencing in fiscal 2021-22;

AND FURTHER that in ongoing consultations with the province, that alPHa propose the establishment of a joint task force made up of both political representatives and professional staff from existing public health agencies, alPHa, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the City of Toronto to undertake the following activities:

- Establish a set of principles to guide the reorganization of public health in Ontario that include:
 - Assurance that the enhancement of health promotion and disease prevention is the primary priority of any changes undertaken
 - Undertaking the consolidation of health units around a community of interests which include distinguishing between rural and urban challenges, and the meaningful participation of First Nations
 - Taking into account the ability of municipalities to pay, considerations for the broad range of proposed changes in funding arrangements between the province and municipalities
 - Developing a governance structure that provides accountability to local councils required to fund local public health agencies; and
- Conduct public outreach to municipal, public health and other stakeholders to validate both the principles and the resulting plans for future re-organization; and
- Ensure that the municipal and public health perspectives on any proposed changes, including the outcomes of consultation, are incorporated.