



April 17, 2019

The Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hepburn Block 10th Floor
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
17th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Dear Ministers:

Ontario's local public health system is an essential part of keeping communities safe and healthy. Public health delivers excellent return on investment and works on the front line to protect our communities from illness and promote health and wellbeing. The services provided by public health, centred on Ontario's Public Health Standards, ensure that our population stays out of the health care system and remain well for as long as possible.

As the Chair of the Board of KFL&A Public Health, I unequivocally support KFL&A Public Health and its staff in the work that they do. The needs of Ontarians are variable and preserving partnerships locally is essential. Local knowledge and expertise to ensure the health of our communities is not something that our region can afford to lose.

Our Board of Health was surprised and disappointed to learn of the Government of Ontario's plans to restructure Ontario's public health system. The proposed \$200 million per year reduction in funding for local public health services represents a significant strain on the ability of local public health agencies like KFL&A Public Health to continue to deliver on their mandate. A reduction in funding that represents 26% of the budget cannot happen without cutting services. These cuts will impact our ability to deliver the front-line public health services that keep people out of hospitals and doctors' offices and will ultimately mean a greater downstream cost to the health care system.

KFL&A Public Health's Board is requesting the Province of Ontario maintain and augment the health protection, promotion, and prevention mandate of KFL&A Public health. Furthermore, we request the Province of Ontario maintain the current 75 percent provincial, 25 percent municipal funding formula for KFL&A Public Health and public health programs in Ontario. We request that the Province of Ontario stop the planned reduction of Ontario public health units from 35 to 10 and the planned reduction by \$200 million from public health and instead initiate consultations with municipalities and

Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health

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public health agencies on the public health system in Ontario. Finally, we have directed the Medical Officer of Health and the staff of KFL&A Public health to work with the Association of Local Public Health Agencies to coordinate and support their efforts to respond to cuts to public health in Ontario. We called upon the municipalities that fund KFL&A Public Health to do the same.

Money invested into public health is money well spent; prevention is the fiscally responsible investment for our communities. There is strong evidence to support the excellent return on investment that public health offers, with an average of \$14 of upstream savings for every \$1 investment in public health services.

It has been fifteen years since the last major public health crisis in this province, and we have learned well from those lessons. We do not wish to repeat the mistakes of the past; the cuts proposed by this government have the potential to jeopardize our ability to protect the health of the people of Ontario.

Ontario has an integrated, cost-effective, and accountable public health system. Boards of health provide programs and services tailored to address local needs across the province. The public health system works upstream to reduce demands and costs to the acute care sector while providing essential front-line services to local communities. Modest investments in public health generate significant returns. In short, public health plays an important role in our work, our families, and our communities. Divestment from it would be a loss for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Denis Doyle".

Denis Doyle, Chair
KFL&A Board of Health

Copy to:

Hon. D. Ford, Premier of Ontario
Hon. H. Angus, Deputy Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Ian Arthur, MPP Kingston and the Islands
Daryl Kramp, MPP Hastings-Lennox and Addington
Dr. David William, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Loretta Ryan, Association of Local Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health
Board of Health members
Kelly Pender, CAO, County of Frontenac
Brenda Orchard, CAO, County of Lennox and Addington
Mayor B. Paterson and City Councillors
Monica Turner, Director of Policy, Association of Municipalities of Ontario

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