

August 3, 2018

VIA EMAIL

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
premier@ontario.ca

The Honourable Lisa MacLeod
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
mcssinfo.css@ontario.ca

The Honourable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
ccu.moh@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford and Ministers MacLeod and Elliott:

Re: Ontario Basic Income Research Project and the Reduction in the Scheduled Social Assistance Rate Increase

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts to express deep concern regarding the recent announcements to reduce important supports to Ontario's most vulnerable citizens. These announcements include the termination of the Basic Income Research Project and the reduction in the scheduled social assistance rate Increase.

The Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts cares deeply about vulnerable Ontarians and supports measures to support health equity through critical financial policies. The Board has previously called for provincial and federal levels of government to pursue a basic income guarantee policy and to increase social assistance rates to reflect the actual cost of nutritious food and adequate housing (Board motions [#43-15](#) and [#50-16](#)).

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There is considerable research that clearly shows that people with lower incomes experience higher burdens of adverse health and social outcomes compared with people of higher incomes. This includes morbidity and/or mortality from chronic and infectious disease, mental illness, and infant mortality, amongst others.^[i] There is a corresponding financial burden to the health care system. A recent report from the Public Health Agency of Canada estimates that socio-economic inequalities cost the health care system \$6.2 billion annually, with Canadians in the lowest income bracket accounting for 60% (or \$3.7 billion) of those costs.ⁱ

It is with deep regret that we learned of your government's recent announcements and we respectfully urge you to reconsider these important supports to vulnerable Ontarians. In line with our own strategic priority of decreasing health inequities and striving for equitable opportunities for health, we would very much welcome the opportunity to engage in dialogue with you on this important health matter.

Yours sincerely,



René Lapierre
Chair
Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts

Cc: Jamie West, Member of Provincial Parliament, Sudbury
France Gélinas, Member of Provincial Parliament Nickel Belt
Michael Mantha, Member of Provincial Parliament, Algoma- Manitoulin
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Long-term Care
All Ontario Boards of Health

^[i] Auger, N and Alix, C. (2016). Income, Income Distribution, and Health in Canada. In Raphael, D. (Eds), Social Determinants of Health (p. 90-109), 3rd edition. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press Inc.

ⁱ Public Health Agency of Canada. The direct economic burden of socioeconomic health inequalities in Canada: an analysis of health care costs by income level. Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada; 2016 [Accessed 2016 Dec 28]. Retrieved from http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/the_direct_economic_burden_-_feb_2016_16_0.pdf.