

February 11, 2019

The Honorable Lisa MacLeod, Minister
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
56 Wellesley Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

Dear Minister MacLeod:

Funding for the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC) program

On behalf of our Board of Health, I am writing to you in support of Thunder Bay District Health Unit's call to action and shared concern regarding the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC) program funding.

As noted in Thunder Bay District Health Unit's call to action, the HBHC program is a prevention/early intervention initiative designed to ensure that all Ontario families with children (prenatal to age six) who are at risk of physical, cognitive, communicative, and/or psychosocial problems have access to effective, consistent, early intervention services and is a mandatory program for Boards of Health.

The Windsor Essex County Health Unit has seen an increase in the complexity of the clients in the HBHC program. As evidenced by the 2018 *Response to Screening and Working With Families With Complex Needs* survey that was completed by all 35 public health units, the HBHC program is seeing an increase in the complex needs of the clients across the province. This survey highlights the need for the potential changes to the model. However, the Ministry has indicated that there is no funding available for the implementation of these changes to the HBHC program in the 2019 fiscal year. Over the last several years, our local School Boards have expressed concerns over the number of children who are experiencing challenges at school entry. The inability to change the current model will continue to affect the percentage of children who achieve optimal growth and development and readiness for school.

The province did indeed commit to funding the HBHC program at 100%. However, since 2008, the HBHC program has not seen any increases in the budget except for the one-time funding in 2012 to support the implementation of the 2012 protocol, and an increase in our FTE to support the Liaison role.

Furthermore, as noted in Thunder Bay District Health Unit's call to action, the review of the HBHC program in 2016 by MNP found a funding gap of approximately \$7.808m (Ministry of Children and Youth Services - Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Review Executive Summary p.7). Notably, this gap continues to grow every year with the increases in salaries, benefits, and operational costs.

On behalf of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, we thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gary McNamara
Chair, Board of Health



Theresa Marentette, RN, MSc
Chief Executive Officer, Chief Nursing Officer

<https://www.wechu.org/board-meetings/january-2019-board-meeting>

c: Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa)
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Ontario Boards of Health
Windsor-Essex MPPs
Windsor-Essex Board of Health



Thunder Bay District Health Unit

MAIN OFFICE

999 Balmoral Street
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6E7
Tel: (807) 625-5900
Toll Free in 807 area code
1-888-294-6630
Fax: (807) 623-2369

GREENSTONE

P.O. Box 1360
510 Hogarth Avenue, W.
Geraldton, ON P0T 1M0
Tel: (807) 854-0454
Fax: (807) 854-1871

MANITOUWADGE

1-888-294-6630

MARATHON

P.O. Box 384
Marathon Library Building
Lower Level,
24 Peninsula Road
Marathon, ON P0T 2E0
Tel: (807) 229-1820
Fax: (807) 229-3356

NIPIGON

P.O. Box 15
Nipigon District
Memorial Hospital
125 Hogan Road
Nipigon, ON P0T 2J0
Tel: (807) 887-3031
Fax: (807) 887-3489

TERRACE BAY

P.O. Box 1030
McCausland Hospital
20B Cartier Road
Terrace Bay, ON P0T 2W0
Tel: (807) 825-7770
Fax: (807) 825-7774

TBDHU.COM

November 21, 2018

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Honourable Lisa MacLeod
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
14th Flr, 56 Wellesley St W,
Toronto, ON
M7A 1E9

Dear Minister MacLeod,
On behalf the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) Board of Health, it is with significant concern that I am writing to you regarding funding for the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC) Program.

The Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) program is a prevention/early intervention initiative designed to ensure that all Ontario families with children (prenatal to age six) who are at risk of physical, cognitive, communicative, and/or psychosocial problems have access to effective, consistent, early intervention services and is a mandatory program for Boards of Health.

In 1997 the province committed to funding the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program at 100%. Province wide funding allocations have been essentially "flat-lined" from an original allocation that was completed in 2008, with the exception of the one-time funding increases for implementation of the 2012 Protocol. In the interim, collective agreement settlements, travel costs, pay increments and accommodation costs have increased the costs of implementing the HBHC program. Management and administration costs related to the program are already offset by the cost-shared budget for provincially mandated programs.

Simultaneously the complexity of clients accessing the program has increased requiring that more of the services be delivered by professional versus non-professional staff. The TBDHU has made every effort to mitigate the outcome of this ongoing funding shortfall however it has become increasingly more challenging to meet the targets set out in HBHC service agreements. At the current funding level services for these high-risk families will be reduced.

In 2016 the firm MNP performed a review of the HBHC program provincially and found that "based on the activities of the current service delivery model, and using the targets outlined in the service agreements ... there is a gap in the current funding of the program of approximately \$7.808M." (Ministry of Children and Youth Services - Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Review Executive Summary p.7)

The Thunder Bay District Board of Health continues to advocate that the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services fully funds the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, including all staffing, operating and administrative costs.

.../2

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

Sincerely,

Original Signed by

Joe Virdiramo, Chair
Board of Health
Thunder Bay District Health Unit

cc. Michael Gravelle, MPP (Thunder Bay-Superior North)
Judith Monteith-Farrell, MPP (Thunder Bay-Atitkokan)
All Ontario Boards of Health