

February 27, 2019

The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building, Room 281  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
College Park, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
777 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

The Honourable Lisa MacLeod  
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services  
Hepburn Block, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

The Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Board) would like to share with you the resolutions passed at our recent meeting on February 27, 2019. The resolutions highlight our continued support of staff and community stakeholders to reduce health inequities, and our support for Bill 60, an act to amend the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish the Social Assistance Research Commission. A copy of the motion passed is included as Appendix A.

One in seven households in our Health Unit region experience food insecurity. Included is a copy of our 2018 Food Insecurity poster, highlighting this important statistic, as Appendix B. Our goal with this key messaging is to emphasize the magnitude of this issue in our area. The full report is available on our website.

While our community has a broad gamete of important social service and food charity programs in place to assist those experiencing food insecurity, this complex issue cannot be adequately or sustainably addressed at the local level. Food insecurity is defined as inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints, which highlights low income as the root of the problem. Our Health Unit continues to raise awareness about the importance of income security for low income Ontarians, in an effort to reduce food insecurity rates. Food insecurity is a significant public health problem because of its great impact on health and well-being. In light of the release of the new Canada's Food Guide, it is important to note that these dietary recommendations are out of reach for many low-income Canadians.

While there are a number of risk factors for being food insecure, social assistance recipients are at particularly high risk. Research has shown that 64% of households in Ontario receiving social assistance

experience food insecurity, demonstrating that social assistance rates are too low to protect recipients from being food insecure. For this reason, our Board supports Bill 60, an act to amend the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish the Social Assistance Research Commission. This group will make recommendations on social assistance policy, including social assistance rates based on the real costs of living in regions across Ontario, taking into account the cost of healthy eating. Our Health Unit, community partners and households receiving social assistance are eagerly awaiting the release of more details about the changes that will be made to Ontario's social assistance system following Minister MacLeod's announcement on November 22, 2018. Please consider the establishment of the Social Assistance Research Commission as part of the changes that will ensue by prioritizing Bill 60.

Last year, we expressed our support and feedback to the previous government on the Income Security: A Roadmap for Change report. This report was prepared in collaboration with many experts, including Indigenous representatives, and has already undergone a public consultation process. Please take into account the elements outlined in this report when implementing changes to the current social assistance system. We emphasized this last August, when we expressed our concern about the cancellation of the basic income pilot project and the reduction to the scheduled increase to social assistance rates in 2018.

Thank you for taking the time to review this information and we will look forward to hearing next steps in strengthening income security in Ontario.

Sincerely,



James Chirico, H.BSc., M.D., F.R.C.P. (C), MPH  
Medical Officer of Health/Executive Officer



Don Brisbane  
Vice-Chairperson, Board of Health

Enclosures (2)

Copied to:

Victor Fedeli, MPP, Nipissing  
Norm Miller, MPP, Parry Sound-Muskoka  
John Vanthof, MPP, Timiskaming-Cochrane  
Robert Bailey, MPP, Sarnia-Lambton  
Paul Miller, MPP, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek  
North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit Member Municipalities  
Joseph Bradbury, Chief Administrative Officer, DNSSAB  
Janet Patterson, Chief Administrative Officer, PSDSSAB  
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Ontario Boards of Health

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Appendix A

**NORTH BAY PARRY SOUND DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT  
BOARD OF HEALTH**

**RESOLUTION**

**DATE:** February 27, 2019

**MOVED BY:** Mike Poeta

**RESOLUTION:** #BOH/2019/02/04

**SECONDED BY:** Dan Roveda

*Whereas, The Nutritious Food Basket Survey results show that many low income individuals and families do not have enough money for nutritious food after paying for housing and other basic living expenses; and*

*Whereas, The Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit recognizes the impact of adequate income on food security and other social determinants of health; and*

*Whereas, Food insecurity rates are very high among social assistance recipients; and*

*Whereas, Bill 60 (An Act to amend the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish the Social Assistance Research Commission) would help ensure social assistance rates are indexed to inflation, reviewed on an annual basis, and reflect regional costs of living including the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket; and*

*Whereas, the Ontario Public Health Standards require public health units to assess and report on the health of local populations, describing the existence and impact of health inequities;*

*Therefore Be It Resolved, That the Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit continue to support the efforts of employees and community stakeholders to reduce health inequities, including food insecurity; and*

*Furthermore Be It Resolved, That the Board of Health support Bill 60 (An Act to amend the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish the Social Assistance Research Commission); and*

*Furthermore Be It Resolved, That the Board of Health provide correspondence of these resolutions to district municipalities, Ontario Boards of Health, Victor Fedeli, MPP (Nipissing), Norm Miller, MPP (Parry Sound-Muskoka), John Vanthof, MPP (Timiskaming-Cochrane), the Honourable Doug Ford (Premier), the Honourable Lisa MacLeod (Minister of Community and Social Services), the Honourable Christine Elliott (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care) and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA).*

**CARRIED:** ✓

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON:** Original Signed by Don Brisbane

# 1 in 7

**Nipissing and Parry Sound  
homes are food insecure  
because they don't have  
enough money.**

**This can mean:**

- Worrying about running out of food
- Eating less healthy food
- Skipping meals
- Having poor health



Be informed [myhealthunit.ca/foodinsecurity](http://myhealthunit.ca/foodinsecurity)