



St. Thomas Site
Administrative Office
1230 Talbot Street
St. Thomas, ON
N5P 1G9

Woodstock Site
410 Buller Street
Woodstock, ON
N4S 4N2

April 3, 2019

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

Delivered via email
Christine.elliott@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Elliott,

On behalf of the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health (SWPH), we applaud the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) for striving to achieve optimal health and wellness for school-aged children and youth. It is, however, with concern that I am writing to you regarding funding for the Child Visual Health and Vision Screening protocol. The Child Visual Health and Vision Screening protocol was introduced in 2018 (by the MOHLTC) and provides direction to boards of health on child visual health and vision screening services to be offered in the school setting.

Childhood vision screening programs have the potential to detect refractive errors, strabismus and other similar conditions which impact visual acuity and in turn benefit an affected child's visual and general development. We endorse the implementation of the Child Visual Health and Vision Screening protocol to provide vision screening services in the school setting. The protocol requires 100% of all senior kindergarten children to be screened utilizing three different screening tools requiring a minimum of 10-15 minutes per child per screening. In our jurisdiction, there are approximately 2200 children that will need to be screened to maintain the standard in each school year.

To ensure this program is operational and sustainable, it is requested that additional funding be provided to implement this new vision screening program within schools.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and request. We look forward to hearing from you. For further information, please contact David Smith, Program Director of School Health at dsmith@swpublichealth.ca or 519-631-9900 ext. 1245.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Larry Martin'.

Larry Martin
Chair, Board of Health

Copy: Members, SWPH Board of Health
C. St. John, CEO, SWPH
M. Nusink, Director of Finance, SWPH
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health