

October 18, 2019

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Mayor Bryan Paterson and City Council
City of Kingston
City Hall
216 Ontario Street
Kingston, ON K7L 2Z3

Dear Mayor Paterson and Council:

RE: Municipal Alcohol Policies and Municipal Policy Options to Mitigate Alcohol Harms

Recently announced provincial regulatory changes will impact the sale, service and consumption of alcohol in local communities. These changes include:

- Municipalities now have the authority to designate public areas, such as parks, for the consumption of alcohol through a local by-law.
- Special Occasion Permit events will have extended hours for the sale of alcohol, will no longer have to serve food at these events, and will not have to physically separate areas where alcohol is sold and consumed from the rest of the event.
- Tailgate Events, where patrons bring their own booze, will be allowed at professional, semi-professional, or post-secondary sporting events.

It is anticipated that these changes will increase alcohol consumption and its concomitant harms, along with demand, and hence cost, for municipal services such as police, EMS, fire services and public health. In fact, in 2014, the cost of alcohol to the healthcare system, criminal justice system, workplaces and other direct costs was \$1.4 billion, \$1.3 billion, \$2.1 billion and \$495 million, respectively. With increased consumption, these costs will only increase.

Ontario municipalities can use Municipal Alcohol Policies (MAPs), along with other municipal policies, to balance the responsible provision and use of alcohol against the need to reduce alcohol-related risk and harm for events hosted on municipal property, and to protect local governments from liability and from increasing costs to manage alcohol-related harms. In the context of the Government of Ontario's alcohol policy reforms, municipalities must consider the following:

- By loosening public consumption controls, the risk increases significantly for underage drinking, harmful alcohol consumption, intoxication, and alcohol-related harms, and could lead to serious injury and death, and consequently municipal liability. Further still, public consumption of alcohol will further normalize its use and its consumption or over consumption in public spaces may hinder the public's enjoyment of community spaces.

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- While there are AGCO guidelines for Tailgate Events, there are insufficient parameters related to the management or monitoring of the Bring Your Own Booze provision, enforcement or staff training. Many municipalities are impacted by unsanctioned street parties involving the over consumption of alcohol by students and other individuals. Unrestricted access to alcohol in this type of environment contributes to harmful drinking behaviour and has the potential to place an undue burden on surrounding neighbourhoods, police and paramedic services. Queen's University Homecoming and St. Patrick's Day give rise to massive gatherings or street parties that are accompanied by a spike in Emergency Department visits in Kingston each year.
- Evidence indicates that expanding hours of alcohol service is related to increased alcohol consumption and related harms. This policy also contributes to the normalization of alcohol use among vulnerable populations including children and youth.

As such, at the October 16, 2019 meeting of the KFL&A Board of Health, the following motion was passed:

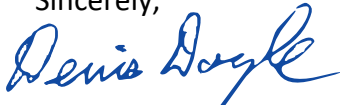
THAT the KFL&A Board of Health strongly advise municipalities to continue to prohibit alcohol consumption in public spaces such as parks as per current *Liquor License Act, 2019*,

THAT the KFL&A Board of Health strongly urges all KFL&A municipalities to strengthen or to develop municipal alcohol policies that balance the responsible provision and use of alcohol against the need to reduce alcohol-related risk and harm, and to include, at a minimum, the following provisions in their Municipal Alcohol Policy (MAP):

- **Specify times permitted for alcohol service and maintain permissible start time of 11 AM at provincially issued SOP events on municipal properties,**
- **Require that food be made available at all provincially issued SOP events on municipal properties; i.e. do not permit alcohol-only,**
- **Specify that designated alcohol service and consumption areas be physically separated from non-designated areas at provincially issued SOP events on municipal properties, and**
- **Prohibit provincially issued SOP Tailgate Events on municipal properties.**

I strongly encourage all of our municipalities to reach out to Daphne Mayer, Manager of the Substance Use, Mental Health and Injury Prevention Team, to develop or strengthen your Municipal Alcohol Policy to preserve the health and safety of our residents.

Sincerely,



Denis Doyle, Chair
KFL&A Board of Health

cc to: Monica Turner, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Pegeen Walsh, Ontario Public Health Association
Loretta Ryan, Association of Local Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health