

From: Miller, Christine
To: AllHealthUnits@lists.alphaweb.org
Subject: Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Letter regarding Funding Public Health Units during COVID-19
Date: August 19, 2020 12:46:26 PM
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[200819 Letter to Minister Elliott Funding HUs during COVID-19.pdf](#)

For Ontario Boards of Health

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Hello,

Please see attached a letter from Anita Dubeau, Board Chair for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit regarding the funding of public health units during COVID-19.

Thank you,

Christine Miller

Executive Assistant to the Medical Officers of Health

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Thank you.

August 19, 2020

The Honourable Christine Elliott
Deputy Premier
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Elliott:

On behalf of the Board of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit I commend the provincial government for its leadership in bringing COVID-19 under control throughout Ontario. Through the definitive leadership of the provincial government, and with the concerted action of local public health units, Ontario has achieved a cumulative incidence of disease that is less than half of our neighbouring states, and a daily incidence at present that is less than 10% of theirs. The rapid action of the province putting in place public health measures in March, and their careful withdrawal since that time have been essential to our success. Also essential has been the redirection of almost all the resources within local health units to enable the timely identification of cases and their contacts for home isolation, management of outbreaks in workplaces, Long Term-Care facilities and retirement homes, and the provision of guidance and direction to municipalities, businesses, organizations and the general public supporting physical distancing, hand hygiene, and face coverings. All of these actions have enabled our communities to flatten the curve without which we would have had the same experience as our neighbouring jurisdictions to the south.

Local public health units, with the leadership of their boards of health, are completely dedicated to the successful control of COVID-19 moving forward until our provision of mass vaccination and with it the hoped-for end to the pandemic. If necessary, we will continue this struggle for years.

In order to continue to be successful, additional resources are needed, and the promise of additional resources by the province has been very much appreciated. This includes the \$100 million to public health communicated earlier in the year (the *COVID-19 Extraordinary Expenses*), and recently the \$50 million (500 nurses) for the public health support to the recommencement of the schools (the *School-Focused Nurses*).

This additional funding will be essential to enable the success of the local public health response to the pandemic; however, its timely provision is also critical to our success. Through communication with Ministry of Health staff we have learned that the *COVID-19 Extraordinary Expenses* will be provided late in 2020 as reimbursement for extraordinary expenditures related to the pandemic response. This approach requires boards of health to take on these expenditures throughout the year without certainty as to the actual amount that they will be reimbursed. Some boards do not have reserve funds, and others have depleted their reserves

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already in their response (including our Board of Health). Without the provision of the funds at this time, these boards will not be able to maintain the level of their response needed to fully control COVID-19. In addition, the boards have been instructed to proceed with hiring the additional *School-Focused Nurses* without having the additional funding at this time required to do so; those boards that do not have remaining reserve funds will not be in a position to do so until they receive these additional funds.

Local public health has performed extraordinary work with the province to flatten the curve, and to enable the opening of the economy and soon the school system. This is a critical time for us all as we strive to maintain these achievements while avoiding a resurgence of cases that would threaten these gains. Therefore, the Board of Health urges the immediate provision of the funding allocations to local boards of health regarding the *COVID-19 Extraordinary Expenses* and for the *School-Focused Nurses* in order to enable a response by local public health units that is unobstructed by local financial shortfalls.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your exemplary leadership.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL Signed By:

Anita Dubeau, Chair
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Board of Health

AD:CG:cm

cc. Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health
Mayor and Council of Simcoe and Muskoka
Members of Provincial Parliament for Simcoe and Muskoka