

November 1, 2021

The Honourable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
777 Bay Street
College Park 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Elliott:

RE: Public Health Funding for 2022

The Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Board) commends the government's financial commitment to public health throughout the pandemic. This trust has enabled public health programs and services, critical to the pandemic response, to continue. There is still much to be accomplished as the pandemic evolves. Vital to achieving future successes is the ability to strategically plan for 2022.

Pursuant to the Health Unit's correspondence of June 24, 2021, the Board is again respectfully requesting the Ministry to urgently establish funding expectations for 2022. This is critical for planning purposes for both the Health Unit and the municipalities we serve.

The Board is urging the Ministry of Health to commit in writing to:

1. Extend COVID-19 funding in 2022 for:
 - a. COVID-19 Extraordinary Costs; and
 - b. COVID-19 Vaccination Extraordinary Costs
2. Establish funding in 2022 for public health recovery efforts
3. Increase provincial funding for public health base budgets with the proportional municipal levy increase needed in 2022 to maintain public health unit capacity

Health units have had only one base funding increase in the past five years; however, wage and benefit increases and general increases to operating costs due to inflation continue. In addition, two public health union contracts are to be negotiated in 2022 with workforces experiencing recruitment and retention issues. A zero percent increase in base funding for 2022 is untenable if health units are to fulfill the requirements for programs, services, and accountability as delineated in the Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability (Standards).

As per the Standards:

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“Boards of health are responsible for programs and services in all core function areas, demonstrating accountability to the ministry, and monitoring and measuring the effectiveness, impact and success of their programs and services.”

Requisite to realizing Ministry expectations to deliver mandated public health programs is a highly skilled and experienced workforce. They are essential to ensuring the future success of entrusted programs such as healthy growth and development, school health, chronic disease prevention and well-being, substance misuse and injury prevention, healthy environments, food safety, infectious and communicable diseases prevention and control, and immunization.

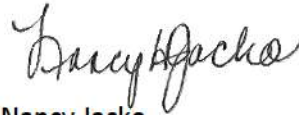
The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that an able-bodied, prepared public health system is more important than ever. Without a base funding increase, public health’s capacity will be diminished, with even harder choices having to be made regarding where we can assist in pandemic recovery and building healthier and sustainable communities. A base funding increase for 2022 is necessary to maintain public health services at status quo.

Your assistance and attention to this pressing matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,



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



Nancy Jacko
Chairperson, Board of Health

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Copy to: Premier Doug Ford
Hon. Helen Angus, Deputy Minister of Health
Chief Medical Officer of Health
Elizabeth Walker, Director, Public Health Accountability and Liaison Branch
Collen Kiel, Director, Public Health Strategy and Planning Branch
Vic Fedeli, MPP, Nipissing
Norm Miller, MPP, Parry Sound-Muskoka
John Vanthof, MPP, Timiskaming-Cochrane
Ontario Boards of Health
Member Municipalities (31)
Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO)
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA)
Council of Medical Officers of Health (COMOH)
Andrea Horwath, New Democratic Party of Ontario, Leader, Official Opposition
Steven Del Duca, Ontario Liberal Party
Mike Schreiner, Green Party of Ontario
Jim Karahalios, New Blue Party of Ontario