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Constituent Societies

ANDSOOHA – Public Health
Nursing Management in Ontario

Association of Ontario
Health Centres

Association of Public Health
Epidemiologists in Ontario

Association of Supervisors of Public
Health Inspectors of Ontario

Canadian Institute of Public
Health Inspectors (Ontario Branch)

Community Health Nurses' Initiatives
Group (RNAO)

Health Promotion Ontario:
Public Health

Ontario Association of Public Health
Dentistry

Ontario Public Health Libraries
Association

Ontario Society of Nutrition
Professionals in Public Health

Public Health Research, Education
and Development (PHRED)
Program

Charitable Registration
Number 11924 8771 RR0001

October 4, 2002

**To: Honourable Tony Clement
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care**

Honourable Minister:

The Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) is a voluntary organization representing the collective interests of over 3000 individuals in public and community health in Ontario through individual and constituent society membership.

At its recent meeting the OPHA Board of Directors voted to send this letter to express its concern that some municipalities may be excused from fully meeting their statutory requirements under the Health Promotion and Protection Act (HPPA).

The HPPA requires boards of health to provide or ensure the provision of mandatory health programs and services in accordance with the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines (MHPSTG) which are published under the authority of the Minister of Health and Long Term Care. The HPPA further requires obligated municipalities to pay all expenses required by their respective boards of health and to ensure that the amount paid be sufficient to enable the board of health to carry out their duties under the act.

Local boards of health are required to comply with the minimum general and program standards as outlined in the MHPSTG. Local funding pressures may not only prevent many boards of health from meeting the requirements, but put additional pressures on them with immediate issues, such as West Nile virus.

The Public Health Branch has directed all 37 local boards of health to become fully compliant with the MHPSTG by 2003. Since 2001 local boards of health have been positioning for full compliance with MHPSTG. Annual budget increases ranging up to 30% have been requested by local boards of health to ensure that program resources are aligned with program requirements. The OPHA Board of Directors strongly urges you as Minister to uphold the HPPA and to inform all obligated municipalities that they are required to fund local boards of

health as per the approved board budgets. As well, our board asks that the Ministry commit to grants to local boards of health at or above 50% of the board approved budget so that boards may comply with the MPHSG. Additionally, we ask that these funds be transferred to the boards of health in a timely fashion.

We are increasingly being reminded of what society has known for well over 100 years: Public health programs are necessary to improve and maintain the health of individuals and communities and thus they are a crucial component of the overall health system. In conclusion we thank you for your consideration of this matter. And we look forward to working with you in the future to make Ontario a healthier place for its citizens.

Sincerely,

Connie Uetrecht,
OPHA President