



Ontario Public Health Association
l'Association pour la santé publique de l'Ontario
Established/Établi 1949

The mission of OPHA is to provide leadership on issues affecting the public's health and to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario.

700 Lawrence Ave. W., Suite 310
Toronto, Ontario M6A 3B4

Tel: (416) 367-3313
1-800-267-6817 (Ont)
Fax: (416) 367-2844
E-mail: info@opha.on.ca
www.opha.on.ca

Honorary Patron

The Hon. James K. Bartleman
Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

President

Dr. Garry Aslanyan
E-mail: gaslanyan@opha.on.ca

Executive Director

Connie Uetrecht
E-mail: cuetrecht@opha.on.ca

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 Society of Nutrition Professionals
in Public Health

Public Health Research, Education and
Development (PHRED) Program

Charitable Registration
Number 11924 8771 RR0001

February 9th, 2007

Honourable George Smitherman
Minister of Health and Long Term Care
MINISTER'S OFFICE
Hepburn Block
10th Flr, 80 Grosvenor St
Toronto ON M7A2C4

Dear Minister Smitherman:

The Ontario Public Health Association, an association of individuals and ten constituent societies who work in public and community health, would like to take this opportunity to encourage the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) to further enhance its investments in Public Health in light of the recommendations in the recently released report "Spring of Fear", the final report from the Honourable Mr. Justice Archie Campbell following the SARS crisis in Ontario. As the report highlights so eloquently, much still needs to be done in order to adequately prepare for another infectious disease outbreak or any other public health crisis.

Justice Campbell's call for renewed focus on strengthening Ontario's Public Health system is especially important to OPHA given the current environment of Public Health system renewal in Ontario. Though we have seen real progress in this area at the provincial level over the past few years, it is imperative that your Ministry implement recommendations of last year's Capacity Review Committee to strengthen the local Public Health infrastructure. While the province has kept its commitment to increase the provincial share of the cost of local Public Health Units, it has also capped any increase in total Public Health budgets at 5%, resulting in no major increases in the resources available to local Public Health Units. This is counter to the intent of the recommendations in this and previous Campbell reports and in your Government's plans under 2004's "Operation Health Protection".

As Campbell states:

"To arm the public health system with more powers and duties without the necessary resources is to mislead the public and to leave Ontario vulnerable to outbreaks like SARS." (Page 31).

OPHA also strongly supports the report's call for increased collaboration and communication between Public Health Units and hospitals, as well as clearer delineation of the roles of each.

OPHA members would concur that present surveillance systems are inadequate and need to be developed and resourced. In addition infection control mechanism, while having improved since SARS, need further development and systematic implementation to create a workplace culture that protects against the spread of infectious diseases.

Further, as the agency charged with protecting the health and safety of workers, including those in health care, the Ministry of Labour must be empowered with more authority and stronger communication with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

Justice Campbell reinforces a recommendation made in his second report which has received little action to date. This recommendation is in regards to the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* which was enacted at the time of SARS and which poses serious but easily remedied problems. We support these remedial actions in order to protect the public from harms that might be caused by improper administration of the emergency powers.

In closing, we encourage your Government to consider and act upon the recommendations within the Mr. Justice Archie Campbell's third report.

Ontarians deserve to have their Public Health system fixed.

Sincerely,

Dr. Garry Aslanyan
President, OPHA

Cc: Premier Dalton McGuinty
Dr. George Pasut, Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health