



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

## **Presentation to the Ontario Minister of Finance**

***OPHA's Pre-Budget Submission***

**January 9, 2017**

Good morning and thank you for hosting these consultations. I would like to offer suggestions in three areas that can help people in their everyday lives while making our province stronger.

### **Mitigating the Harms from the Expansion of Alcohol Distribution and Preparing for the Legalization of Cannabis**

Last year, your government committed to having a provincial alcohol strategy. OPHA was pleased to offer our expertise as part of those consultations. We know you are strongly committed to social responsibility and we urge you to announce this strategy as soon as possible. Our members are poised to assist with its delivery. Allocating a percentage of sales revenue will be important to support its effective implementation.

As your government develops the regulatory framework for cannabis, consider funding initiatives that can mitigate the negative health consequences being experienced in other jurisdictions.

### **Building Public Support for Basic Income Guarantee**

We applaud your government's commitment to a Basic Income Pilot. Income is one of the most critical factors that affect health. We ask you to allocate adequate funds to ensure the pilot's success, including funds for a community engagement strategy. This strategy should address the frustration and mistrust that exists among some individuals and organizations about social assistance and poverty in order to build public support. Our members have been champions for this pilot and would be pleased to assist.

We are encouraged by other commitments to address poverty - the development of a food security strategy, the review of social assistance, expansion of affordable housing and child-care - all importance measures to improve health outcomes.

### **Prevention Pays Off**

Canada's TD Bank has noted that a healthier population is less costly to serve, and prevention is a key part of a more sustainable health system for Ontario<sup>i</sup>. New evidence is showing that prevention is paying off. For example, a 2016 study by Dr. Doug Manuel, from the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, showed health care savings of \$4.9 billion over ten years from changes in health behaviours, mainly from reductions in smoking<sup>ii</sup>. He concluded that more savings can be had through investing in prevention and reducing social inequity. With 58,000 visits to Ontario hospitals for dental related emergencies in 2012<sup>iii</sup>, imagine what could be saved through expanding eligibility for publically funded preventative oral health services. Assessing the health impact of

initiatives across government through a health-in-all polices approach could also reap savings.

We ask you to ensure that funding for public health is not eroded and strategic investments are made that further a prevention agenda. Through working with various partners and sectors at the local level, the public health community is influencing the factors that promote individual and community health. Their efforts in areas such as: health equity, tobacco control, obesity, diabetes and injury prevention, healthy child development, oral health, infectious disease and health hazards, contribute to health care savings and community prosperity and well-being.

For over 67 years, our non-profit organization has been bringing together groups and individuals concerned about people's health – be from the health, academic, non-profit to the private sector. OPHA shares your Government's commitment to building a prosperous, fairer and healthier Ontario and welcomes the opportunity to work together to achieve this.

## References:

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.td.com/document/PDF/economics/special/td-economics-special-db0510-health-care.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.ices.on.ca/Publications/Atlases-and-Reports/2016/A-4-9-Billion-Dollar-Decrease-in-Health-Care-Expenditure>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.oaphd.on.ca/images/stories/pdfs/2014-01-16-report-005-14.pdf>

## About OPHA

*Created in 1949, the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that brings together a broad spectrum of groups and individuals concerned about people's health. OPHA's members come from various backgrounds and sectors - from the various disciplines in public health, health care, academic, non-profit to the private sector. They are united by OPHA's mission of providing leadership on issues affecting the public's health and strengthening the impact of people, who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario. This mission is achieved through professional development, information and analysis on issues effecting community and public health, access to multidisciplinary networks, advocacy on health public policy and the provision of expertise and consultation.*

*OPHA members have been leading change in their communities on a wide range of issues - tobacco control, poverty reduction, diabetes prevention, increased access to oral health care, immunization, supporting children and families, food security, climate change and designing walkable communities, among others.*

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