

May 4, 2017

Hon. Kathleen Wynne
Premier of Ontario
Queen's Park, Legislative Building, Room 281
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Wynne:

On behalf of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) and the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), we are writing to express our support for the recent announcement on the launch of Ontario's Basic Income Pilot (OBIP) in three Ontario communities in the spring and fall of 2017. Both of our organizations passed resolutions in support of basic income in 2015, and contributed to a joint submission to the Government of Ontario's recent public consultation on the pilot. We are pleased to see that your government is now moving forward without delay to test the contribution of a strong basic income in support of individual and community well-being.

In particular, we are very happy to see that many of the elements we highlighted in our submission to the consultation have been incorporated into the model. In particular, we commend:

- your commitment that no one will be worse off as a result of their participation in the pilot, in particular by maintaining most previous benefits;
- sites that reflect Ontario's demographic and geographic diversity, including Indigenous communities;
- inclusion of individuals who are currently employed and unemployed;
- a three year pilot to allow time to detect outcomes;
- setting the benefit level at or above 75% of the Low Income Measure;
- ensuring that the benefit amount is responsive to changes in a participant's circumstances;
- the choice of indicators in the areas of food security, stress and anxiety, mental health, and health and healthcare usage, in addition to the other selected outcomes;
- evaluation by a third-party research consortium, including academics; and
- your stated intention to pursue a robust public awareness/engagement initiative.

We understand that you plan to work in collaboration with community groups, and look forward to hearing details of that process. As one element, in provincial and/or local advisory committees you are forming, we suggest the participation of those with lived experience of poverty and precarious employment, as well as diverse sectors, including public health.

As also stated in our submission, we believe that a basic income is only one element of a comprehensive approach to poverty reduction. As a result, we are very encouraged by your stated commitment at the launch of the basic income pilot to continue to move forward on other elements of poverty reduction policies and programs in the months ahead.

Thank you for your ongoing and internationally-recognized leadership on this pivotal health and social initiative. We would welcome the opportunity to further support the design, implementation and evaluation of the basic income pilot as it moves into the next phase and contribute in areas where our networks and expertise would be valuable.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Valerie Jaeger
alPHa President



Ellen Wodchis
OPHA President

- cc. Hon. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services
Hon. Chris Ballard, Minister of Housing, Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy
Hon. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hon. Michael Coteau, Minister of Children and Youth Services
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris, Associate Minister of Education (Early Years and Child Care)
Dr. Bob Bell, Deputy Minister, Health and Long-Term Care
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Roselle Martino, ADM Population and Public Health Division
Andrea Horwath, Leader, New Democratic Party
Patrick Brown, Leader, Progressive Conservative Party