



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.

44 Victoria St., Suite 502
 Toronto, ON M5C 1Y2

Tel: (416) 367-3313
 Fax: (416) 367-2844
 E-mail: admin@opha.on.ca
www.opha.on.ca

President
 Karen Ellis-Scharfenberg
 E-mail: president@opha.on.ca

Executive Director
 Pegeen Walsh
 E-mail: PWalsh@opha.on.ca

Constituent Societies

- Alliance for Healthier Communities
- Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario (APHEO)
- Association of Supervisors of Public Health Inspectors of Ontario (ASPHEO)
- Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (Ontario Branch) (CIPHIO)
- Community Health Nurses' Initiatives Group (RNAO)
- Health Promotion Ontario (HPO)
- Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry (OAPHD)
- Ontario Association of Public Health Nursing Leaders, (OAPHNL)
- Ontario Dietitians in Public Health (ODPH)
- Ontario Society of Physical Activity Promoters in Public Health (OSPAPPH)

*Charitable Registration
 Number 11924 8771 RR0001*

August 13, 2018

Hon. Lisa MacLeod
 Ontario Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
 14th Floor, 56 Wellesley St West
 Toronto, ON.
 M7A-1E9

Re: Support for a Basic Income Guarantee

Dear Minister MacLeod,

On behalf of the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) and its constituent societies, I am writing to express our concern with the decision to terminate Ontario's Basic Income Pilot and suggest some possible alternatives.

OPHA is supportive of this pilot as it provides a means to evaluate whether a basic income improves the economic well-being of vulnerable Ontarians and increases their odds of escaping the cycle of poverty.

As a non-partisan non-profit organization, OPHA is committed to providing leadership and evidence informed expertise on issues affecting the public's health. Extensive evidence shows that low income people are at significantly greater risk of preventable medical conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, cancer and mental health and addictions issues, and changing income can change these troubling outcomes. In a Canadian example, the Mincome initiative in Manitoba demonstrated significant reductions in hospitalizations due to accidents, injuries and mental health. OPHA supports the Basic Income Pilot as a public health intervention that can contribute to reducing the burden on Ontario's health care system. Given the documented long-term societal costs of poverty, particularly in comparison to Ontario's health care budget, it would seem that the costs of implementing this pilot are relatively small.

That being said, we recognize that there may be some community members who do not support this initiative and may view it as a hand out rather than a hand up. We would be pleased to work with our colleagues, networks and your ministry to further raise awareness at the local and provincial level about the links to poverty and health, the value of this pilot and other social assistance programs.

The Basic Income pilot has involved some 4,000 Ontarians who are committed to building a better future for themselves, their families and their communities. It also involves 2,000 additional individuals who are 'controls' (i.e. no basic income) to test the pilot and build a strong base of research for future social policy planning. Only through completion of the pilot can the effects be truly understood. While your commitment to ensure a smooth transition for the participants is laudable, we urge you to consider completing the pilot so that its effects can be truly understood.

In summary, OPHA feels that the Ontario Basic Income Pilot is a promising approach to income security that should be allowed to reach its natural conclusion. This would allow a robust base of data to be collected, analyzed and interpreted to assess the extent to which it met its stated objectives. We ask that you reconsider your decision to cancel the program prematurely so that these alternatives can be explored.

My colleagues and I welcome the opportunity to meet with you and/or members of your team to discuss your concerns with this pilot and explore possible ways these could be addressed. I have asked the Executive Director of our organization, Pegeen Walsh, to contact your office to seek a meeting to explore the ideas we have offered and to determine how we may be able to contribute to any upcoming reviews of social assistance being planned by your ministry. You may also wish to contact Ms. Walsh at pwalsh@opha.on.ca or 416-367-1281 if you and/or members of your team are receptive to such a meeting. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Karen Ellis-Scharfenberg
President, Ontario Public Health Association

COPY: Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Health and Long-Term Care
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Roselle Martino, Assistant Deputy Minister, Population and Public Health Branch
(Health and Long Term Care)
Dr. Christopher Mackie, Chair, Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health
Dr. Robert Kyle, President, Association of Local Public Health Agencies

More about the Ontario Public Health Association

We are a member-based charity that has been advancing the public health agenda since 1949. OPHA provides leadership on issues affecting the public's health and strengthens the impact of those who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario. OPHA does this through a variety of means including promoting public dialogue, education and healthy public policy, capacity building, research and knowledge exchange. Our membership brings together many different disciplines and sectors working together to achieve our shared vision of optimal health for all.

www.oph.on.ca | 416-367-3313 | admin@oph.on.ca