

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Hon. Dalton McGuinty  
Premier of Ontario  
Queen's Park, Rm 281  
Main Legislative Building  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A4

Dear Premier McGuinty,

The Ontario Public Health Association is requesting the support of your government in implementing the comprehensive set of recommendations put forward by a group of experts in tobacco control in a report, *Building on Our Gains, Taking Action Now: Ontario's Tobacco Control Strategy for 2011 – 2016*.

As you know we have made tremendous gains in tobacco control over the past five years through the 2004 Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy. Despite the successes, there are still 2.1 million smokers in Ontario and each year thousands of youth start smoking and become addicted. It is clear we need to take additional actions to reduce the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Ontario – the use of tobacco products.

There is public support for further action. According to data from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's 2009 Monitor, 69.3% of respondents support a reduction in retail outlets, 84.2% support smoking bans in multi-unit dwellings and 80.1% support smoking bans on restaurant and bar patios. It is clearly time to take further action

While our Association recommends a comprehensive set of actions to reduce supply and reduce demand here are some priority actions to be taken in the next year:

- fulfill the government's repeated promises to make smoking cessation medications more widely available as part of a comprehensive smoking cessation system;
- restrict the tobacco industry's ability to produce new, non-therapeutic tobacco products, and elimination of all flavoured and smokeless tobacco products;

- reduce the number of retail outlets selling legal tobacco products by requiring retailers to be licensed or by other methods;
- increase tobacco taxes; and
- take action against contraband tobacco.

It is time to shift our focus in tobacco control from encouraging non-smokers to resist temptation to smoke to halting the sale and distribution of tobacco products.

The **Ontario Public Health Association** (OPHA) is a not-for-profit organization with a unique interdisciplinary and multifaceted structure that provides a unified and independent approach to safeguarding and improving the health of all Ontarians. For over 60 years, OPHA has provided leadership on important issues and has served as a catalyst for strengthening public and community health by supporting key functions such as health protection and promotion, disease and injury prevention, monitoring health status and decreasing disparities. Through strategic collaborations and partnerships, OPHA is increasingly positioning itself as the voice of public health in Ontario.

Sincerely,



Liz Haugh

c.c. NDP Health Critic

Conservative Health Critic