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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 Public Health Libraries
Association

Ontario Society of Nutrition
Professionals in Public Health

Public Health Research, Education
and Development (PHRED)
Program

November 30, 2001

**To: The Honourable Tony Clement
M.P.P. Brampton West
Minister of Health and Long Term Care**

Dear Minister Clement:

The mission of the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) is to strengthen the impact of people who are active in community and public health throughout Ontario. OPHA achieves this through education, advocacy, issue identification, public health expertise, and consultation in public and community health. OPHA represents the collective interests of approximately 3,000 individuals in public and community health through individual and constituent society memberships.

OPHA wishes to express concern regarding the recent layoff of five scientists at the Ministry of Health Central Public Health Reference Laboratory in Toronto. Public Health Laboratory staff provides services to Ontario public health units and health care facilities, which are integral to investigating outbreaks of communicable disease. In addition, Laboratory Services Branch staff is involved in ongoing research on new or re-emerging forms of pathogenic bacteria, viruses, parasites and other agents of disease, and on laboratory methods of identification. We are concerned that the staff layoffs may compromise the capacity of the Central Public Health Laboratory to provide timely information, advice, and laboratory services to health units on an ongoing basis, but we are particularly concerned about responding to outbreaks of disease. If Public Health Laboratory support is compromised then the ability of the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and public health units to respond to outbreaks, supported by appropriate laboratory services, might also be compromised.

OPHA would appreciate your assurances that the recent staff layoffs at the Central Public Health Reference Laboratory will not affect laboratory services currently available to public health units and health care facilities.

Yours truly,

Connie Uetrecht
President, OPHA