alPHa
Association of Local
PUBLIC HEALTH
Agencies

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alPHa's members are the public health units in Ontario.

alPHa Sections:

Boards of Health Section

Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health (COMOH)

Affiliate Organizations:

Association of Ontario Public Health Business Administrators

Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario

Association of Supervisors of Public Health Inspectors of Ontario

Health Promotion Ontario

Ontario Association of Public Health Dentistry

Ontario Association of Public Health Nursing Leaders

Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health

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30 YEARS 1986-2016
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July 20 2016

Hon. Helena Jaczek,
Minister of Community and Social Services
Hepburn Block 6th Flr
80 Grosvenor St
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Jaczek,

Re: Public Health Support for a Basic Income Guarantee

On behalf of member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa), I am writing to reiterate our strong support for the design and implementation of a Basic Income Pilot in Ontario.

Having passed alPHa Resolution A15-4 (Public Health Support for a Basic Income Guarantee, attached) in 2015, we were very pleased with the announcement of the pilot in the 2016 Ontario Budget, and we are delighted that Hon. Hugh Segal has been appointed to lead the consultation that will inform the design of the project. We are given to understand that he will present a discussion paper in the fall, and our members are very eager to provide input to the paper itself as well as any processes that your Ministry will undertake following its receipt.

The relationship between health and income is well established, and there is no longer any question that as income rises, health outcomes improve. We know that lower income people are at far greater risk from preventable medical conditions such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and mental illness. We therefore believe that improving incomes would be an exceptionally effective public health intervention.

We are particularly interested in ongoing participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the pilot, to ensure that the population health perspective is central. While we agree that a guaranteed income will address a host of issues associated with poverty, our principal interest lies in their central influence on the health of Ontarians, which in turn influences the overall health of Ontario.

Our members have important contributions to make and are keen to enumerate expected community health outcomes and provide advice on how best to measure them as a function of income. We hope that public health will be well represented throughout the design and implementation of this important project.

Once again, we congratulate you for moving forward on this proposal and pledge our support.

Best regards,

Valerie Jaeger
alPHa President

COPY: Dr. David Williams, Interim Chief Medical Officer of Health
Hon. Deb Matthews, Minister Responsible for the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy
Hon. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Ontario)
Hon. Hugh Segal, Special Advisor on Basic Income
Dr. Rosana Salvaterra & Carolline Wai, Co-Chairs, alPHa-OPHA Health Equity Work Group

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alPHa RESOLUTION A15-4

TITLE: **Public Health Support for a Basic Income Guarantee**
SPONSOR: **Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit**

WHEREAS low income, and high income inequality, have well-established, strong relationships with a range of adverse health outcomes; and

WHEREAS 1,745,900 Ontarians, or 13.9% of the population, live in low income according to the 2011 National Household Survey after-tax low-income measure; and

WHEREAS income inequality continues to increase in Ontario and Canada; and

WHEREAS current income security programs by provincial and federal governments have not proved sufficient to ensure adequate, secure income for all; and

WHEREAS a basic income guarantee – a cash transfer from government to citizens not tied to labour market participation - ensures everyone an income sufficient to meet basic needs and live with dignity, regardless of work status; and

WHEREAS basic income resembles income guarantees currently provided in Canada for seniors and children, which have contributed to health improvements in those age groups; and

WHEREAS there was an encouraging pilot project of basic income for working age adults conducted jointly by the Government of Manitoba and the Government of Canada in Dauphin, Manitoba in the 1970s, which demonstrated several improved health and educational outcomes; and

WHEREAS a basic income guarantee can reduce poverty and income insecurity, and enable people to pursue educational, occupational, social and health opportunities relevant to them and their family; and

WHEREAS the idea of a basic income guarantee has garnered expressions of support from the Canadian Medical Association and the Alberta Public Health Association as a means of improving health and food security for low income Canadians; and

WHEREAS there is momentum growing across Canada from various sectors and political backgrounds for a basic income guarantee;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) endorse the concept of a basic income guarantee**;**

AND FURTHER that alPHa request that the federal Ministers of Employment and Social Development, Labour, and Health, as well as the Ontario Ministers Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Seniors, Labour, Children and Youth Services, and Health and Long-Term Care, prioritize joint federal-provincial consideration and investigation into a basic income guarantee, as a policy option for reducing poverty and income insecurity and for providing opportunities for those in low income;

AND FURTHER that the Prime Minister, the Premier of Ontario, the Chief Public Health Officer, the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Ontario Public Health Association, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario be so advised.