MAR 02 2006

Mr. Larry Di Ianni, Chair
City of Hamilton Board of Health
1 Hughson Street North, 4th Fl.
Hamilton ON L8R 3L5

Dear Mr. Di Ianni:

I would like to commend you on your continuing efforts towards the renewal of public health in Ontario and share with you our directions for public health funding in 2006.

Together, we have clearly demonstrated our commitment to public health. We have worked hard to revitalize the system through dedication and support, including the provinces uploading for funding Mandatory Health Programs and Services. Provincial funding will grow from $273 million in 2004-05 to an estimated $469 million by 2007-08.

Furthermore, we have made significant investments related to province-wide public health programming and services, including 100% provincial funding in the following areas:

- $156M over 3 years for three new childhood vaccines
- $41.7M to support Operation Health Protection, including:
  - 180 infectious disease positions in public health
  - Regional Infection Control Networks
  - Implementation of an integrated Public Health Information System in all 36 health units
- $13.5M over 3 years to build preparedness for chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) emergencies.

The McGuinty government is committed to ensuring Ontario is prepared for emergencies, and that is why we established the Emergency Management Unit in December 2003, released the second edition of the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic in June 2005, and released the Ministry Emergency Response Plan in July 2005.

In recognition of this government’s commitment to keeping the people of Ontario healthy, we have created Ontario’s first-ever Ministry of Health Promotion with the appointment of my colleague, the Honourable Jim Watson, as Minister. Under Minister Watson’s leadership, our government is strengthening its focus on healthy, active living and illness prevention across the province. This includes investing $50 million in 2005-06 for the implementation of a comprehensive Smoke-free Ontario strategy. Together our ministries are working in partnership on public health funding to strengthen our collective efforts to prevent disease and promote health.
The excellent work of two committees also deserves to be highlighted. The Agency Implementation Task Force is close to submitting its final report on the design of Ontario’s first Public Health Agency. In addition, I await the final report of the Capacity Review Committee regarding strengthening governance and accountability in public health, including a multi-year funding framework.

These collective investments represent a historic milestone in public health renewal.

However, the growth rate for provincial funding of public health units was 8.8% in 2005, and has averaged 9.4% since 2001. This rate of growth, on top of the upload, must be more modest if our public health system is to be sustained. I look to you, as leaders in public health, for you: cooperation in ensuring the best possible use of our health care resources to support the important work of public health. This work should be guided by the health needs of Ontarians and will be supported by strengthened accountability practices.

With this context in mind, we will be reviewing board of health grant requests within a provincial envelope that provides for up to 5% growth in 2006.

As part of the government’s commitment to increase the provincial share of public health funding from 50% in 2004 to 75% by 2007, $127 million in eligible public health costs will be uploaded. Staff will continue to work closely with you to ensure that key public health priorities are funded with appropriate consideration of local and provincial priorities.

You will receive further correspondence shortly from Dr. Sheela Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health Division that will include further information regarding the 2006 Program-Based Grant process and funding requirements.

In closing, I extend to you and your staff my gratitude for your contributions to the renewal of public health in Ontario.

Yours truly,

George Smitherman
Minister

c: Hon. Jim Watson, Minister of Health Promotion
Hon. John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Ted McMeekin, MPP (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot)
Andrea Horwath, MPP (Hamilton East)
Hon. Marie Bountrogianni, MPP (Hamilton Mountain)
Judy Marsales, MPP (Hamilton West)
Jennifer F. Mossop, MPP (Stoney Creek)
Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, Medical Officer of Health, City of Hamilton - Public Health and Community Services Health Department
Dr. Liana Nolan, President, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Dr. Garry Aslanyan, President, Ontario Public Health Association
Roger Anderson, President, Association of Municipalities of Ontario