November 2, 2007

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

MEMORANDUM FROM DR. ROBERT KYLE, COMMISSIONER & MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH, DATED OCTOBER 18, 2007 RE: TORONTO BOARD OF HEALTH/alpha RESOLUTION

Right Honourable Sir, please be advised the Health & Social Services Committee of Regional Council considered the above matter and at a meeting held on October 31, 2007 Council adopted the following recommendations of the Committee:

"a) THAT the following resolution of the Toronto Board of Health respecting the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket, income support and poverty reduction be endorsed;

1. Request the Premier of Ontario to increase Ontario Works benefit rates so that the Basic Allowance includes a nutrition component which is sufficient to meet daily nutritional needs as determined annually by the cost of the Nutritious Food Basket and that the remainder of the Basic Allowance be set to enable recipients to afford other basic needs including transportation, clothing and personal cash items;

2. Request the Premier of Ontario to publish annually the details of current social assistance rate components and how they are determined, including the nutrition component of the Basic Allowance;

3. The Ministry of Health Promotion collate the results of the Nutritious Food Basket surveys conducted by local Boards of Health and report the findings publicly on an annual basis;

4. Continue to champion community efforts to reduce health disparities by endorsing the 25 in 5 Network's call to provincial political candidates and parties to develop a comprehensive plan to reduce poverty rates in Ontario by 25% in five years;
5. Request that all levels of government make significant investments in affordable housing, universal child care and other strategies that impact on income security;

6. Reaffirm its request to the Premier of Ontario to increase minimum wage rates to ensure a standard of living to promote optimal health;

7. Request the Premier of Ontario to implement the Ontario Child Benefit fully by 2008;

8. Request the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) to submit its province-wide findings on the nutritious food basket survey and its resolution A05-18 entitled “Adequate Nutrition for Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program Participants and Low Wage Earners” to the leaders of all provincial parties to request a commitment from the parties to implement the recommended measures by September 25, 2007, to enable a public release of the responses prior to the provincial election on October 10, 2007;

9. Request the Chair of the Board of Health to submit the Toronto Nutritious Food Basket results and the Board of Health’s position and strategies to address poverty, to the Toronto Caucus Chair of each provincial party and request a response prior to the end of September so that the results can be made public; and

10. Forward this report to key stakeholders: the City of Toronto’s Community Development and Recreation Committee, the General Managers of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, Children’s Services, Homes for the Aged and Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the Ontario Ministers of Health Promotion, Community and Social Services, Children and Youth Services and Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion at Health Canada, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, the Ontario Public Health Association’s Community Food Security Workgroup, all Ontario Boards of Health, the Association of Ontario Health Centres, the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health and Dietitians of Canada asking for support in drawing attention to the need for a Provincial poverty reduction strategy including support and resources to Public Health Units to address food security and social determinants of health.; and
b) THAT the Prime Minister of Canada, Durham's MPs, the Premier of Ontario, Ministers of Community and Social Services, Finance and Health Promotion, Durham's MPPs, alPHa, OMSSA, and all Ontario boards of health be so advised.

Pat M. Madill, AMCT, CMM I
Regional Clerk

PMM/daj

c: Dr. Colin Carrie, M.P. (Oshawa)
The Honourable Jim Flaherty M.P. (Whitby/Oshawa)
Mr. Dan McTeague M.P. (Pickering/Scarborough East)
Mr. Barry Devolin M.P. (Kawartha Lakes/Brock)
The Honourable Bev Oda M.P. (Clarington/Scugog/Uxbridge)
Mr. Mark Holland M.P. (Ajax/Pickering)
The Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier
The Honourable Jim Watson, Minister of Health Promotion
Ms. Laurie Scott, MPP (Haliburton/Victoria/Brock)
Mr. Wayne Arthurs, MPP (Pickering/Ajax/Uxbridge)
Ms. Christine Elliott, MPP (Whitby/Ajax)
Mr. John O'Toole, MPP (Durham)
Mr. Jerry Ouellette, MPP (Oshawa)
Mr. Joe Dickson, MPP (Ajax/Pickering)
Ms. L. Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Dr. Garry Aslanyan, President, Ontario Public Health Association
Ontario Boards of Health
Dr. R.J. Kyle, Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health