April 23, 2007

His Worship Fred Eisenberger
Mayor
City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

Dear Mayor Eisenberger:

Thank you for your letter of March 21, 2007 regarding Hamilton’s Committee of the Whole’s review of the proposed Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS). On behalf of my co-chair, Dr. Robert Nosal, and the Program Standards Technical Review Committee (TRC), I want to thank Hamilton’s Committee of the Whole, and staff of the City of Hamilton’s Public Health and Social Services for reviewing the proposed standards and participating in the consultation process. We acknowledge and appreciate the time and effort that was required to participate in the process given the tight timeline for completion.

The development of renewed standards is a significant step toward ensuring the continued revitalization and strengthening of Ontario’s public health system. The OPHS have been developed within the context of cost-neutrality to support the sustainability of the public health system, and of the health system as a whole. That being said, we acknowledge that supporting documents and training will be required to support boards of health to effectively and consistently implement the standards across the province.

The government will review the proposed OPHS upon the TRC’s submission of the final draft to the Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health on April 30, 2007. As part of the review process, the government will assess the proposed standards and proposed supporting protocols. The proposed protocols would further articulate details regarding the delivery of the requirements outlined in the OPHS to promote standardization, where standardization is warranted. Should the government agree, the proposed protocols would be developed based on current scientific evidence, and would likely entail consultation with boards of health.
We are pleased that our key approach for developing the OPHS – moving toward standards that are measurable and linked with specific performance measures for increased accountability – is consistent with the approach that Hamilton's Committee of the Whole wishes to take. In this regard, it is our expectation that in the future, the renewed standards will be integrated into an overall performance management system for public health. The development of a comprehensive performance management system will be a complex task and will likely be incremental in nature.

Please be assured that your comments and concerns will be considered along with others as the government reviews the proposed OPHS.

Again, we thank Hamilton's Committee of the Whole for its submission, and for its continued support in revitalizing and strengthening public health in our province.

Sincerely,

Monika Turner
Acting Co-Chair, Program Standards Technical Review Committee
Director, Public Health Standards Branch

c: The Honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
   The Honourable Jim Watson, Minister of Health Promotion
   The Honourable Mary-Anne Chambers, Minister of Children and Youth Services
   Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, Medical Officer of Health, City of Hamilton Public Health and Social Services
   Dr. Robert Nosal, Co-Chair, Program Standards Technical Review Committee, and Medical Officer of Health, Halton Region
   Dr. George Pasut, Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health Division, MOHLTC
   Ms. Ruth Hawkins, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health Division, MOHLTC
   Ms. Paulina Salamo, Manager, Program Standards, Public Health Division, MOHLTC