Dear Mayor Dilanni:

Thank you for your letter dated March 23, 2006 to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care concerning the potential impacts of the Haines Report on Hamilton's Public Health Services food safety program.

In your correspondence you make reference the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) taking regulatory action with respect to mandatory food safety certification of premises personnel and food safety requirements for food events held by churches, service clubs and fraternal organizations.

**Mandatory Food Safety Certification**

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care is in the final stages of obtaining policy approval to implement Mandatory Food Safety Training and Certification in Ontario. The proposal was shared with stakeholders, including representatives from the Association of Supervisors of Public Health Inspectors of Ontario and the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (Ontario Branch) who participated in several stakeholder meetings.

The Ministry also proposes to create an accreditation process that will establish standards for the food safety curriculum and the method of delivery of educational courses and examinations. Food handlers would also have the flexibility of enrolling in any Ministry accredited food safety training courses offered through health units or any accredited courses offered by public or private training organizations. It is anticipated that health units will administer the program on a cost recovery basis. The proposed program offers a cost efficient process for responding to the goal of strengthening food safety in the Province.

**Churches, Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations**

The current Ontario Food Premises Regulation (O. Reg 562) sets the minimum standards for food preparation and handling. Churches, service clubs and fraternal organizations are exempt from the regulation if:

(i) they are preparing meals for, and serving meals to, their members and personally invited guests, and

(ii) they are conducting bake sales.
Mayor Larry Dilanni

You may be aware that the MOHLTC is undertaking a review of the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines. In conjunction with that undertaking, the Food Premises Regulation will be opened up and all sections reviewed and amended as necessary.

In the interim, and regardless of any exemption from the Food Premises Regulation, all foods should be prepared following safe food handling practices. The MOHLTC maintains that in situations where the regulation does not apply (i.e. an exemption), risk of food borne illness should be reduced by preparing hazardous food in an approved kitchen and not in home kitchens.

It is hoped that your queries regarding the MOHLTC taking regulatory action respecting the Haines Report have been addressed.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

David Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health and
Director of Infectious Diseases Branch

c:  Mr. Fred Ruf, Acting Head, Environmental Health and Toxicology, Food Safety and Safe Water and Unit, Public Health Division

Mr. Robert Hall, Director, Environmental Health and Infection Control Branch, City of Hamilton Social and Public Health Department