

March 13, 2018

Honourable Helena Jaczek  
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
10th Floor, Hepburn Block  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Jaczek:

**Re: 2018 Annual Service Plan including the 2018 Budget for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit**

At its meeting on February 15, 2018, the Board of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit approved its 2018 Annual Service Plan (Plan) including the 2018 Budget. As the Board discussed the Plan and Budget, it expressed its concerns that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) had frozen base funding at 2014 levels for our Health Unit and others. Of course, the Board recognizes that there have been additions to base funding for targeted purposes such as the recent Harm Reduction Program Enhancement funding. Boards of health continue to face significant financial pressures as costs increase with no corresponding increase in base funding going into this fourth-year post-budget freeze. Locally, our obligated municipalities have increased their share of the Board's base funding every year to the point that now the ratio of cost-shared base funding is 29% municipal to the MOHLTC's 71%. We understand that the majority of Ontario boards of health are in a similar position.

As you know, the past couple of years have been a period of significant transformation for Ontario boards of health with the release of the new Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), amended and new protocols and guidelines to support the new OPHS and amendments to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990* and many of its Regulations. The Board is most appreciative of the Harm Reduction Program Enhancement funding, and other minor adjustments to base funding. However, the Board is concerned about the MOHLTC's increasing expectations regarding the new/amended OPHS, protocols and guidelines including those pertaining to Infection Prevention and Control Lapse investigations, engagement with the Local Health Integration Networks, the new School Health Program Standard, the Healthy Environments Program Standard requirement for health impact assessment related to climate change, and follow-up of hepatitis C cases to name a few, as well as the role of public health regarding opioids and the new cannabis legislation. Doing more with less is causing strain on staff and the Board is concerned about the psychological and physical well-being of Health Unit employees in light of ever-increasing requirements and our ability to deliver programs and services.

The Board has implemented many initiatives over the past four years to address the provincial funding shortfall including closing branch offices and renegotiating leases as well as utilizing technological solutions where feasible to address telephone and fax as well as organizational meetings. The Board recognizes its important role in community-based health promotion, disease prevention and health protection over a large geographic area with a low population density. The Board values its relationships with the broader health sector as well as its many community partners and stakeholders including local municipalities, school boards, children's aid societies, law enforcement, non-governmental

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agencies and community coalitions and wishes to build on these relationships to implement the new OPHS. The Board is concerned that if the provincial share of the base budget remains frozen, decisions will need to be made regarding delivery of essential programs and services and the remaining programs may erode making them harder to re-build when not maintained at optimal levels.

The Board has again approved a 2% municipal increase for the Health Unit this year and has requested a 2% increase in its base funding from the MOHLTC in addition to some one-time requests to facilitate addressing new program requirements. Municipalities are also facing increasing cost pressures and may be challenged to continue to offset provincial funding with enhanced municipal support in the future. The Board respectfully requests that the MOHLTC approve its 2018 Annual Service Plan including the 2018 Budget. Lastly, with this request to approve the proposed budget, the Board would greatly appreciate earlier budget approval than the historic September to November timeline so that the Health Unit can effectively plan and implement one-time funding approvals.

Sincerely

BOARD OF HEALTH FOR THE HALIBURTON,  
KAWARTHA, PINE RIDGE DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT



Mark Lovshin  
Chair, Board of Health

ML/ALN/MCM:ed

Copy: Laurie Scott, MPP, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock  
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