



Sudbury & District

Health Unit

Service de
santé publique

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November 5, 2004

Via Electronic Mail

The Honourable George Smitherman
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
80 Grosvenor Street
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Mr. Smitherman:

RE: Discontinuation of the Health Intelligence Unit Program Funding

Please be advised that at its meeting of October 21, 2004, the Sudbury & District Board of Health passed the following motion #90-04, and is seeking your attention to this important matter:

WHEREAS the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced that the Ontario Health Intelligence Unit (HIU) program funding will cease as of March 31, 2005; and

WHEREAS the Northern Health Information Partnership (NHIP) is the northern HIU that has provided excellent health information to pan northern partners, including the Sudbury & District Health Unit; and

WHEREAS there is a need to ensure that the key functions performed by the NHIP in supporting complex analysis of health information and interpretation continue to be available to the public health community; and

WHEREAS the loss of this valuable resource for northern Ontario and for Ontario public health will decrease the public health system's access to quality health information, sound analytic capacity and intelligent interpretation of complex data; and

WHEREAS quick action is needed by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, particularly in the north, in order to preserve the pool of talented, knowledgeable individuals and not lose their expertise from the health system; and

WHEREAS there is an opportunity to effectively incorporate the HIU functions within the current changing public health context which includes establishment of the Health Protection and Promotion Agency, the review of the Public Health Division, the public health system capacity and the Public Health Research, Education and Development (PHRED) program reviews and the development of the Local Health Integrated Networks (LHINs);

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health urge the Honourable G. Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, to act quickly to ensure that the capacity to carry out the essential HIU functions in support of northern public health practice be preserved; and

FURTHER THAT the Sudbury & District Board of Health express their formal appreciation to the Board of Directors and staff of the NHIP for their valuable work and leadership in support of northern public health practice; and

FURTHER THAT this motion be forwarded to the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontario Boards of Health and the Association of Public Health Agencies for their support.

The Sudbury & District Board of Health expresses their appreciation for the noteworthy accomplishments and valuable data support provided by the Board of Directors, Director and staff of the Northern Health Information Partnerships. Additionally, the Board strongly urges the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to take immediate action to ensure that the key functions performed by the NHIP in supporting complex analysis of health information continue to be available to the northern public health community.

Yours in public health,

Original signed by

Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

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c: Dr. Sheela Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Chair, Board of Directors, Northern Health Information Partnerships
Director, Northern Health Information Partnerships