



Sudbury & District

Health Unit

Service de
santé publique

*Make it a
Healthy
Day!*

*Vivez Santé
dès
aujourd'hui!*

Sudbury

1300 rue Paris Street
Sudbury ON P3E 3A3
☎ : 705.522.9200
☎ : 705.522.5182

Rainbow Centre

40 rue Elm Street
Unit / Unité 109
Sudbury ON P3C 1S8
☎ : 705.522.9200
☎ : 705.677.9611

Chapleau

101 rue Pine Street E
Box / Boîte 485
Chapleau ON P0M 1K0
☎ : 705.860.9200
☎ : 705.864.0820

Espanola

800 rue Centre Street
Unit / Unité 100 C
Espanola ON P5E 1J3
☎ : 705.222.9202
☎ : 705.869.5583

Île Manitoulin Island

6163 Highway / Route 542
Box / Boîte 87
Mindemoya ON P0P 1S0
☎ : 705.370.9200
☎ : 705.377.5580

Sudbury East / Sudbury-Est

1 rue King Street
Box / Boîte 58
St-Charles ON P0M 2W0
☎ : 705.222.9201
☎ : 705.867.0474

Toll-free / Sans frais
1.866.522.9200

www.sdhu.com

December 12, 2011

The Honourable Deb Matthews
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

The Honourable John Milloy
Ministry of Community and Social Services
6th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

The Honourable Eric Hoskins
Ministry of Children and Youth Services
56 Wellesley Street West, 14th floor
Toronto, ON M5S 2S3

Ms. Frances Lankin
Mr. Munir A. Sheikh
Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario
2 Bloor Street West
4th Floor, Suite 400
Toronto ON M4W 3E2

Dear Ministers, Ms. Lankin and Mr. Sheikh:

Re: Social Assistance and Health

I am pleased to provide you with a copy of the Sudbury & District Board of Health report, *"Nutritious Food Basket – Limited Incomes: A Recipe for Hunger 2011"*.

On behalf of the Board of Health, I urge you to ensure that the findings of this report and those of all nutritious food basket reports from Ontario's 36 boards of health inform the work of the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario.

Each year boards of health are required to collect local data using a standardized Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) survey to determine the actual costs for families of various sizes to eat healthfully. Every year our data highlight that households on social assistance or minimum wage cannot afford a nutritious diet after paying for housing costs and other basic necessities such as transportation, clothing, and personal care items.

The Sudbury & District Board of Health would like to bring to your attention the recommendations and findings from three previous initiatives:

*An Accredited Teaching Health Unit
Centre agréé d'enseignement en santé*

The 2007 Sudbury & District Board of Health motion asking the Government of Ontario to:

Implement (Ontario Works) OW and (Ontario Disability Support Program) ODSP rates that reflect the cost of living and are indexed annually to reflect inflation, including the findings of yearly Nutritious Food Basket costing conducted by local Boards of Health based on protocols established by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care”.

The 2002 Coroner's Inquest recommendations following the 2001 death of Kimberly Rogers:
The Ministry of Community, Family, & Children's Services and the Ontario Works Program should assess the adequacy of all social assistance rates. Allowances for housing and basic needs should be based on actual costs within a particular community or region. In developing the allowance, data about the nutritional food basket prepared annually by local health units and the average rent data prepared by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation should be considered. Rationale: To ensure that social assistance rates are adequate and adjusted annually if necessary.

The 2009 Wellesley Institute report, Sick and Tired: The Compromised Health of Social Assistance Recipients and the Working Poor in Ontario:

Higher rates of chronic disease and poor health were documented among social assistance recipients as compared with the non-poor. In some cases, these rates were 7.2 times higher. These findings are consistent with those found in our Sudbury & District Health Unit studies and many others from across Ontario.

Every Board of Health has a legislative duty to undertake activities to prevent the spread of disease and promote and protect health of the people who reside in our area. Boards of health are keenly aware of the poorer health outcomes of Ontarians living below the poverty line. We are also keen to work in partnership with you to eliminate barriers to health and reduce costs to the health care system.

Thank you for your commitment to these important matters. The Sudbury & District Board of Health looks forward to further dialogue and a decision to incorporate local food costs into social assistance calculations as a measure to support health and reduce illness.

Sincerely,



Ron Dupuis, Chair
Sudbury & District Board of Health

Encl.

cc: Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health, MOHLTC
Dr. Vivek Goel, President and Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Ontario
Fern Dominelli, Chief Administrative Officer, Sudbury and Manitoulin-Sudbury District
Social Services Administrative Administration Board
Janet Gasparini, Executive Director, Social Planning Council of Sudbury
Kira Heineck, Executive Director, Ontario Municipal Social Services Association
Linda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Mr. Michael Mantha, Member of Provincial Government (Algoma-Manitoulin)
Mr. Rick Bartolucci, Member of Provincial Government (Sudbury)
Ms. France G  linas, Member of Provincial Government (Nickel Belt)
Pat Vanini, Executive Director, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Siu Mee Cheng, Executive Director, Ontario Public Health Association
Sudbury & District Health Unit Constituent Municipalities
Vonda Croissant, Executive Director, Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities

*An Accredited Teaching Health Unit
Centre agr  e d'enseignement en sant  *