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Health Unit

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**Toll-free / Sans frais**  
1.866.522.9200

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November 4, 2015

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1  
Email: premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Wynne:

**Re: Limited Incomes = A Recipe for Hunger: Nutritious Food Basket 2015**

At its meeting on October 15, 2015, the Sudbury & District Board of Health carried the following resolution #43-15:

*WHEREAS the Sudbury & District Board of Health has monitored the cost of healthy eating on an annual basis since 2008 in accordance with the Nutritious Food Basket Protocol and the Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol per the Ontario Public Health Standards; and*

*WHEREAS the 2015 costing results continue to demonstrate that individuals and families living on low incomes cannot afford food after paying for housing and other necessities and therefore may be at higher risk for food insecurity; and*

*WHEREAS food insecurity means inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints and has serious public health implications; and*

*WHEREAS a basic income guarantee is a cash transfer from government to citizens not tied to labour market participation that can ensure everyone has an income sufficient to meet basic needs; and*

*WHEREAS basic income guarantee is similar to the income guarantees provided in Canada for seniors and children, which have contributed to health improvements in those groups; and*

*WHEREAS basic income guarantee is a simpler and more transparent approach to social assistance and has the potential to eliminate poverty; and*

*WHEREAS the Association of Local Public Health Agencies endorsed the concept of basic income guarantee;*

Letter

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*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Sudbury & District Board of Health urge provincial and federal governments to prioritize and investigate a joint federal-provincial basic income guarantee as a policy option for reducing poverty;*

*FURTHER THAT while basic income guarantee is being investigated, ask the Province to increase social assistance rates to reflect the actual cost of nutritious food and adequate housing as informed by the current results of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Nutritious Food Basket and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Rental Income (Ontario) reports; and*

*FURTHER THAT the Sudbury & District Board of Health request that the Province index social assistance rates to inflation to keep up with the rising cost of living; and*

*FURTHER THAT the Sudbury & District Board of Health share this motion and supporting materials with appropriate community agencies, boards, and municipalities throughout the catchment area.*

There is a well-established link between poverty and income inequality, and health. In particular, access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food is essential for health. The basic income guarantee is a policy lever that would dramatically improve the opportunities for health for all Canadians. Until this is established, we urge your government to raise social assistance rates so that individuals and families can afford to feed themselves nutritiously and pay for housing and the necessities of life. This is a critical step toward health equity in our province.

Sincerely,



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

Enclosure: Nutritious Food Basket 2015

cc: The Honourable Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Dr. David Williams, Interim Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Dr. Gregory Taylor, Chief Public Health Officer  
Linda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Pegeen Walsh, Executive Director, Ontario Public Health Association  
Fern Dominelli, Chief Administrative Officer, Manitoulin-Sudbury District  
Services Board  
Joseph Leblanc, Executive Director, Social Planning Council of Sudbury  
Sue Rumble, Child Poverty Task Force, Manitoulin Island  
Mayors/Reeves, Sudbury & District Health Unit Constituent Municipalities