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November 17, 2016

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: Nutritious Food Basket 2016

At its meeting on October 20, 2016, the Sudbury & District Board of Health carried the following resolution #50-16:

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

WHEREAS the 2016 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 risk for food insecurity; and

WHEREAS, within the 2016 Budget, the provincial government announced a Basic Income Pilot and has appointed the Honourable Hugh Segal to provide advice on the design and implementation of a Basic Income Pilot through a discussion paper to be delivered to the province by the fall;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Sudbury & District Board of Health commend the provincial government on taking steps to investigate basic income guarantee as a policy option for reducing poverty; and

THAT social assistance rates be increased 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 share this motion and supporting materials with community agencies, boards, municipalities, elected representatives and others as appropriate throughout the SDHU catchment area.

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne

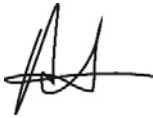
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Food insecurity is inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints and has serious public health implications. It is well understood that health care costs increase as the severity of food insecurity increases. Health care costs for households experiencing severe food insecurity are 121% higher compared with total annual health care costs in food secure households¹. Further, social assistance recipients are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. In Ontario, 64.0% of the households reliant on social assistance experienced food insecurity². A basic income guarantee has the potential to eliminate poverty and food insecurity.

The Board of Health commends the provincial government for pursuing the potential for a basic income guarantee in Ontario. We would note that an increase in social assistance rates in the meantime would be important to improve health equity across Ontario.

Thank you for your attention to this important health matter,



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

Enclosures: 2016 Nutritious Food Basket Scenarios (English and French)

cc: The Honourable Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
The Honourable Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services
Dr. David Williams, 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
Louise Paquette, Chief Executive Officer, North East LHIN
Fern Dominelli, Chief Administrative Officer, Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
Joseph Leblanc, Executive Director, Social Planning Council of Sudbury
Kristin Bickell, Child Poverty Task Force, Manitoulin Island

1. Tarasuk V, Cheng J, Oliveria C, Dachner N, Gundersen C, Kurdyak P. Association between household food insecurity and annual health care costs. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. 2015; 1-8. Doi:10.1503/cmaj.150234
2. Tarasuk V, Mitchell A, Dachner N. (2016). Household food insecurity in Canada, 2014. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved from <http://proof.utoronto.ca/>