

Sent via e-mail: [christine.elliott@ontario.ca](mailto:christine.elliott@ontario.ca)

March 1, 2022

The Honourable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health  
College Park, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
777 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Elliott:

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has consistently advocated for municipal governments to have meaningful involvement in health care service planning and decision-making on behalf of our municipal council members and their communities.

Although funding the health care system is a provincial responsibility, it has come to our attention recently that several municipal governments, public health units, and municipal services (e.g., paramedic services, long-term care homes) have been asked by Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) to provide funding for their 2022/23 operating budgets. These requests appear to be linked to having a seat at the OHTs' health care service planning and decision-making table(s).

In AMO's view and on behalf of our members, these requests are inappropriate and unacceptable.

Municipal governments already substantially contribute to population and community health and wellness. Municipal governments in Ontario contributed \$2.23 billion in combined operating and capital costs for health services in 2018. In addition, 80% of municipal operating expenditures in 2018 contributed in some way to the social determinants of health. Municipal governments and municipal services belong at these tables given their existing contributions to the greater health system and for their communities. They should not be asked nor expected to pay for access to OHT governance tables.

We have recently become aware that the Ministry of Health's [2020 Guidance](#) permits OHTs to determine their criteria and process for adding members. There is a fundamental difference between the OHTs asking or requiring "membership fees" to support their annual operating funds and municipalities funding their own staff to participate in OHT tables. The latter can be considered to be in-kind support to the OHT which is not being challenged. This is an acceptable cost of municipal involvement. As well, municipally supported projects that involve working with Ontario Health or OHT(s) should not be affected by our approach.

To date, we are not aware of any municipality, public health unit, long-term care or paramedic service, that is actually contributing to an OHT's operating budget. AMO reiterates that OHTs

should not ask municipal governments or other publicly funded organizations and agencies to contribute to OHT funding.

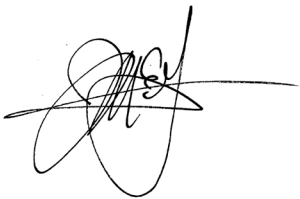
There are concerns that this practice may be a barrier to participation in OHT governance for social service and non-profits organizations, along with Indigenous Friendship Centres. These organizations are valuable contributors to health system planning alongside municipal governments and other health system players.

Another emerging concern is that, in the near future, the Ministry of Health may consider flowing cost-shared public health, paramedic services funding through Ontario Health and the OHTs. Such an action would blur transparency and accountability on these cost-shared health services. A government-to-government funding relationship must continue. The responsibility for these cost-shared services and their associated funding should not be reassigned to Ontario Health. We also include provincial funding for municipal long-term care in this category although not a "cost-shared program" *per se*. It will need a dedicated funding envelope guaranteed to meet regulatory requirements.

AMO appreciates your consideration of this issue and asks that the existing OHT guidance from your Ministry be amended to ensure these funding requests are not made to municipal governments and our services or boards. It is a provincial responsibility to fund the health care system and the provincial government must fund Ontario Health and OHTs properly to fill their mandates. It is inappropriate to rely on fees from municipal governments, public health units, or municipal services to fill the gaps.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure the municipal role in health is appropriately reflected in Ontario Health Teams.

Sincerely,



Jamie McGarvey  
AMO President and Mayor of the Town of Parry Sound

cc: The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Dr. Catherine Zahn, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health  
Melanie Fraser, Associate Deputy Minister, Health Services, Ministry of Health  
Susan Picarello, Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Health Services Division, Ministry of Health  
Amy Olmstead, Executive Lead (Acting), Ontario Health Teams, Ministry of Health  
Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, President, Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)  
Peter Dundas, President, Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs (OAPC)  
Connie Lacy, Chair, AdvantAge Ontario