

March 15, 2018

The Honourable Dr. Helena Jaczek  
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

RE: 2017 Report of the Office of the Auditor General - Chapter 3, Section 3.10 - Public Health: Chronic Disease Prevention

Dear Minister Jaczek,

On behalf of the Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario (APHEO), I am writing in response to the 2017 Report of the Office of the Auditor General - Chapter 3, Section 3.10 - Public Health: Chronic Disease Prevention.

We welcome the findings of the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) as it highlights the current gaps and challenges experienced by our membership in providing relevant, timely, and consistent evidence from population health assessments that is inclusive of our legislative mandate and within the budgetary constraints of our local public health units. As articulated in the Population Health Assessment Standard of the modernized Ontario Public Health Standards, which took effect on January 1, 2018, “population health assessment provides the information necessary to understand the health of populations through the collaborative development and ongoing maintenance of population health profiles, identification of challenges and opportunities, and monitoring of the health impacts of public health practice” (p.18). A concerted effort will be required in order to address the current gaps and challenges experienced by public health units in its ability to provide evidence from population health assessments to inform chronic disease prevention policies, programming and services.

The OAG outlined a number of recommendations under Recommendation 6 to support public health units to more efficiently and cost-effectively obtain and analyze epidemiological data for program planning and evaluation. Based on the OAG’s recommendations, we are pleased with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s (“Ministry”) response and the actions that the Ministry will take to support public health units in the future. We are confident that these actions will enable public health units to better deliver chronic disease prevention programs and services to improve population health outcomes while reducing the cost burden on the healthcare system.

In an effort to strengthen public health partnerships across the province and to better address chronic diseases in Ontario, APHEO would welcome the opportunity to assist in implementing these intended actions. Our members have the practical local expertise to help shape the most effective methods of implementing these actions with respect to population health assessment and surveillance, assess their feasibility from a local perspective, and identify other important partners who may contribute value to these deliberations.

We look forward to working with you towards the goal of making Ontario a healthier place to live.

Sincerely,



Vidya Sunil  
APHEO President

Copy:

Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, MOHLTC

Roselle Martino, Assistant Deputy Minister, Population and Public Health Division, MOHLTC

Dr. Bob Bell, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health and Long-Term Care

Sharon Lee Smith, Associate Deputy Minister, Health and Long-Term Care, Policy and Transformation

Jackie Wood, Director, Planning and Performance Branch, Population and Public Health Division,  
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Derrick Araneda, Chief of Staff, Office of the Hon. Dr. Helena Jaczek, MOHLTC