



July 17, 2009

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Premier and Minister of Research and Innovation
Hepburn Block
Room 281, Main Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier McGuinty:

Re: Recommendations regarding food safety and foodborne illness

On July 17, 2009, at a regular Board of Health meeting for Grey Bruce Health Unit, the Board considered the resolution from the Regional Municipality of Durham dated June 5, 2009 which advocates support of recommendations of the Toronto Board of Health dated April 20, 2009 with respect to food safety and foodborne illness. The following resolution, adapted from those noted, was passed:

Resolution 2009-75

WHEREAS the production and sale of good quality, safe food is instrumental to the Agricultural and Tourism business in Grey and Bruce Counties; and

WHEREAS several recent high profile outbreaks of foodborne illness have caused suffering, financial loss and a loss in consumer confidence in food; and

WHEREAS Health Canada estimates that between 11 and 13 million Canadians suffer from the effects of foodborne illness a year;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health for the Grey Bruce Health Unit request the Government of Ontario to implement the outstanding recommendations of the 2004 *Report of the Meat Regulatory and Inspection Review* (the Haines Report), including to:

- i. require all food premises to implement a provincially-developed food safety program based on a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point approach;
- ii. amend the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* to require that all food premise operators and at least one other person present in the food premise, at all times of operation, be a certified food handler;

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- iii. develop and implement a province-wide public health investigation, compliance and enforcement policy for all food premises; and
- iv. develop and implement uniform consumer food safety education programs;

THAT the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care ensure that Boards of Health receive sufficient provincial funding to comply fully with the *Food Safety Protocol* of the *Ontario Public Health Standards*;

THAT the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion enhance laboratory capacity for rapid identification of agents of foodborne illness in Ontario;

THAT the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care explore the feasibility of making all health service data on gastrointestinal illness (the Integrated Public Health Information System; Telehealth Ontario; the Ontario Laboratory Information System; and the new Emergency Room Information System) available to local public health units and to the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion to enable early identification of potential clusters of foodborne illness;

THAT the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada, with input from local public health units, review: the *Foodborne Illness Outbreak Response Protocol to Guide a Multi-Jurisdictional Response* (FIORP); the *Ontario Foodborne Health Hazard and Illness Outbreak Investigations Memorandum of Agreement*; and the *Food Premises Plant Investigation: Multi-Agency Roles* document, to ensure that:

- i. roles and responsibilities of responding agencies are clear and consistent in all protocols, including lead responsibility for public communications;
- ii. regular training, including multi-agency simulation exercises, is provided for staff of all responding agencies; and
- iii. a process is put in place for activating FIORP and striking an outbreak coordination committee of responding agencies whenever a significant multi-jurisdictional outbreak occurs;

THAT the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to review its food recall and public notification policies and procedures to ensure that:

- i. a food product is recalled and the public notified when epidemiologic evidence provides reasonable and probable grounds to conclude that cases of foodborne illness are linked to consumption of a food product; and
- ii. public communications and recall verification procedures are thorough and effective in reducing exposure to a potentially hazardous food product;

AND FURTHER THAT copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister of Canada; the Minister of Health, Government of Canada; the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, Government of Canada; the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; the Public Health Agency of Canada; Sheila Weatherill, Independent Investigator, Listeriosis Investigative Review; the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Province of Ontario; the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Province of Ontario; the Minister of Natural Resources, Province of Ontario; the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion; the Association of Local Public Health Agencies; the Ontario Public Health Association; local Members of Federal and Provincial Parliament; and all Boards of Health in Ontario.

Building Healthy Communities Together,

Original Signed by

Hazel Lynn, MD, FCFP, MHSc
Medical Officer of Health

HL/ab

Copies to:

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health (Canada)
The Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food (Canada)
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Public Health Agency of Canada
Sheila Weatherill
The Honourable David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Ontario)
The Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (Ontario)
The Honourable Donna Cansfield, Minister of Natural Resources (Ontario)
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health (Acting)
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa)
Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion
Ontario Public Health Association
Ontario Boards of Health
Larry Miller, MP Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
Ben Lobb, MP Huron-Bruce
Helena Guergis, MP Simcoe-Grey
Bill Murdoch, MPP Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
Carol Mitchell, MPP Huron-Bruce
Jim Wilson, MPP Simcoe-Grey