

alPHa's members are
the public health
units in Ontario.

alPHa Sections:

Boards of Health
Section

Council of Ontario
Medical Officers of
Health (COMOH)

**Affiliate
Organizations:**

Association of Ontario
Public Health Business
Administrators

Association of
Public Health
Epidemiologists
in Ontario

Association of
Supervisors of Public
Health Inspectors of
Ontario

Health Promotion
Ontario

Ontario Association of
Public Health Dentistry

Ontario Association of
Public Health Nursing
Leaders

Ontario Dietitians in
Public Health

Hon. Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
College Park 5th Flr, 777 Bay St
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

August 29, 2024

Dear Minister Jones,

**Re: Ontario Protecting Communities and Supporting Addiction Recovery with
New Treatment Hubs**

On behalf of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) and its Boards of Health Section, Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health Section, and Affiliate organizations, I am writing about the recent provincial government announcement: *Ontario Protecting Communities and Supporting Addiction Recovery with New Treatment Hubs*.

The ongoing drug/opioid poisoning crisis continues to affect every part of Ontario, often with devastating consequences for individuals, their families, and their communities. While alPHa applauds the government's plan to increase supports to address homelessness and addiction treatment, we are concerned regarding the prohibition of harm reduction supports in the new Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hubs. alPHa urges the government to have an approach to substance use that includes the full spectrum of care, ranging from harm reduction to treatment to recovery supports, as part of a comprehensive drug strategy. Such a strategy would reduce overdose deaths, increase access to treatment and other health and social services, reduce transmission of infectious diseases, including HIV and hepatitis C, reduce public injection of drugs, and reduce publicly discarded hazardous syringes.

We appreciate funding for supervised drug consumption sites that are provincially-funded to transition to become a HART Hub and ask for further information, including application and operational details. We also ask the government for assistance, including approvals and flowing funds to these sites in a timely manner, to meet the new requirements for safety and security plans, as part of a collaborative and effective multi-sectoral approach, and to avoid closure of these sites. Furthermore, we encourage the provincial government to create additional HART Hubs in urban areas where demand is highest and in rural and northern communities where travel distances can be prohibitive for those seeking services.

Local public health agencies are well positioned to continue to play a key role in a multi-sectoral response to the opioid crisis. We would be pleased to speak with you and your staff. To schedule a meeting, please have your staff contact Loretta Ryan, Chief Executive Officer, alPHa, at loretta@alphaweb.org or 416-595-0006 ext. 222.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Trudy". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Trudy Sachowski,
Chair, alPHa

Copy: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontario
Elizabeth Walker, Executive Lead, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

The Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) is a not-for-profit organization that provides leadership to Ontario's boards of health. alPHa represents all of Ontario's 34 boards of health, medical officers and associate medical officers of health, and senior public health managers in each of the public health disciplines – nursing, inspections, nutrition, dentistry, health promotion, epidemiology, and business administration. As public health leaders, alPHa advises and lends expertise to members on the governance, administration, and management of health units. The Association also collaborates with governments and other health organizations, advocating for a strong, effective, and efficient public health system in the province. Through policy analysis, discussion, collaboration, and advocacy, alPHa's members and staff act to promote public health policies that form a strong foundation for the improvement of health promotion and protection, disease prevention and surveillance services in all of Ontario's communities.