

November 9, 2021

Via email: Christine.Miller@smdhu.org

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
Attention: Anita Dubeau, Chair, Board of Health
15 Sperling Drive
Barrie, ON L4M 6K9

Dear Ms. Dubeau:

RE: Correspondence – Request for Additional COVID-19 Funding

On behalf of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Lake of Bays, please be advised that the above-noted correspondence was presented at the last regularly scheduled meeting on November 9, 2021, and the following resolution was passed:

“Resolution #7(c)/11/09/21

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Lake of Bays hereby receives the correspondence from Anita Dubeau, Chair, Board of Health, for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and supports their request to Minister Christine Elliott for additional COVID-19 funding, dated October 21, 2021;

AND FURTHER THAT this resolution be forwarded to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and to all Ontario municipalities.

Carried.”

Sincerely,



Carrie Sykes, Dipl. M.A., CMO, AOMC,
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk.

CS/cw

Copy to: Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
All Ontario Municipalities

October 21, 2021

Honourable Christine Elliott
Ministry of Health
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Elliott:

On behalf of the Board of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU), I commend the strong progress being made in bringing COVID-19 under control through the public health measures and the vaccination campaign directed by the provincial government of Ontario. We continue to work collectively to complete the “final mile” of vaccination of the population while simultaneously continuing all activities of COVID-19 surveillance and case management/contact tracing.

The COVID-19 work has required an unprecedented quantity of resources, particularly human resources. Accordingly, boards of health have had to significantly augment their staffing specifically for the Mass Immunization Clinics. Salaries and related expenses of this greatly enhanced workforce (including transportation, supplies and equipment) have only been partially managed by the funding received from the province on July 22, 2021. SMDHU only received 42% of its COVID-19 funding request and costs to date have far exceeded that funding. To add to 2021 cash flow pressures, SMDHU would require the hiring of nursing and administrative staff to implement the provincially mandated vaccine clinics for 5–11-year-olds in Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka as well as implement the “booster” clinics for specific populations. With no immediate COVID-19 funding, these pressures for the end of 2021 compound finance issues for SMDHU and will potentially impede our ability to finance the human resources required.

The SMDHU Board of Health via management staff have been in active communication with Ministry of Health staff specifically related to the one-time funding COVID-19 requests. Unfortunately, the Board of Health experienced cash flow issues in July due to the lack of COVID-19 funding from the Ministry of Health to the point, that the Board was forced to seek approval from its four obligated municipalities to borrow from a bank up to \$5M to cover salaries and expenses for COVID-19 activities. SMDHU also sought and received from the Ministry of Health an advance in funding for the Ministry portion of the cost-shared budget to ensure that payroll commitments and the payment of vaccination expenses could be met. On October 20, 2021, the Board of Health approved a motion requesting that boards of health immediately receive the *COVID-19 Extraordinary Costs* and *COVID-19 Vaccine Extraordinary Costs* funding as articulated in SMDHU’s Q2 financial statement and that the Ministry of Health commit in writing to:

- (1) extend COVID-19 funding in 2022;
- (2) establish funding in 2022 for public health recovery activities; and,

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Barrie, ON
L4M 6K9
705-721-7520
FAX: 705-721-1495

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280 Pretty River Pkwy.
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L9Y 4J5
705-445-0804
FAX: 705-445-6498

Cookstown:
2-25 King Street S.
Cookstown, ON
L0L 1L0
705-458-1103
FAX: 705-458-0105

Gravenhurst:
2-5 Pineridge Gate
Gravenhurst, ON
P1P 1Z3
705-684-9090
FAX: 705-684-9887

Huntsville:
34 Chaffey St.
Huntsville, ON
P1H 1K1
705-789-8813
FAX: 705-789-7245

Midland:
A-925 Hugel Ave.
Midland, ON
L4R 1X8
705-526-9324
FAX: 705-526-1513

Orillia:
120-169 Front St. S.
Orillia, ON
L3V 4S8
705-325-9565
FAX: 705-325-2091

- (3) increase provincial funding for public health base budgets proportional to the municipal levy increase needed in 2022 to maintain capacity for public health program delivery.

The financial pressure from not having access to the required amount of COVID-19 funding from the province, with the simultaneous requirement to respond to the pandemic through surveillance, case and contact management, outbreak response, education and enforcement of the changing requirements of the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act*, and the vaccination of the population has placed the Board in a precarious financial situation. If there is not sufficient funding from the province, there is also a sizeable risk that SMDHU will have a large year-end deficit moving into 2022 based on 2021 COVID-19 expenses that may require a large municipal levy increase to eliminate the deficit and to address the response needs in 2022.

For these reasons the SMDHU Board of Health urges the provincial government to approve and immediately flow the amount required by each health unit of one-time *COVID-19 Extraordinary Costs* and *COVID-19 Vaccine Program Extraordinary Costs*.

Thank you for considering this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL Signed By:

Anita Dubeau
Chair, Board of Health

AD:CG:cm

cc: Ontario Boards of Health
MPPs of Simcoe Muskoka
City of Barrie Mayor and Council
City of Orillia Mayor and Council
The District Municipality of Muskoka District Chair and Council
County of Simcoe Warden and Council
Dr. Kieran Moore, Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Graydon Smith, President, Association of Municipalities of Ontario