

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

The Honourable Deb Matthews
Minister of Health
Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Floor 80 Grosvenor Street
Hepburn Block
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Matthews,

We are writing to affirm that the Windsor-Essex Chapter of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) is in support of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit's (WECHU)

Raising Healthy Children: A Healthy Kids Strategy for Windsor-Essex

This proposal was developed in response to the report recently released entitled, "No Time to Wait: The Healthy Kids Strategy". The WECHU's proposal details a much needed strategic plan to mobilize support for the Windsor-Essex community to address factors contributing to childhood obesity. The goal is to decrease childhood obesity in our community by 20% over the next 5 years. As a professional association, RNAO has developed tools such as the "Primary Prevention of Childhood Obesity" Best Practice Guidelines (2005), which has been adopted locally by many healthcare organizations; however, more support is needed at the government level to deal with this growing community issue.

As you know, obesity – and the factors leading to it – exacts a costly toll on morbidity, mortality and actual fiscal costs in our province. Indeed, we understand that the direct and indirect costs associated with unhealthy eating, physical inactivity and unhealthy weights exceed \$298 million annually in the Windsor-Essex community. Further, it is recognized by many authorities that the best approaches to reduce these costs must occur across the age continuum with a focus on reducing and preventing childhood obesity. The WECHU's ***Raising Healthy Children: A Healthy Kids Strategy for Windsor-Essex*** proposal would do just this.

As leaders in our community, trusted healthcare professionals and as strong advocates for healthy public policy, RNAO Windsor-Essex Chapter wholeheartedly endorses the WECHU's grant proposal and strategic five year plan to address the serious issue of childhood obesity in our region. It is time to take action. The first step is for you and your Ministry to support the Windsor Essex County Health Unit in their efforts to combat this growing public health crisis.

Sincerely yours,

The Executive Committee

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
Windsor-Essex Chapter

Cc: Minister Teresa Piruzza, Ministry of Children and Youth Services
Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Ms. Kate Manson-Smith, Assistant Deputy Minister of Health Promotion, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Mr. Gary McNamara, Mayor, Town of Tecumseh - Chair, Windsor-Essex County Board of Health
Mr. Tom Bain, Warden, County of Essex - Mayor, Town of Lakeshore
Mr. Eddie Francis, Mayor, City of Windsor
Dr. Gary Kirk, Associate Medical Officer of Health and CEO, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
Dr. Doris Grinspun, Chief Executive Officer for the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
Rhonda Seidman-Carlson, President of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario