

**Ministry of Health
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Dear Colleagues:

Subject: Launch of Sector Engagement on Building Public Health Capacity

We are excited to announce the launch of a sector engagement strategy that presents an opportunity for you to provide your input and perspectives on building public health capacity at the local level, and for us to benefit from your public health expertise and experience.

The Public Health Division of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health Promotion, is looking for public health stakeholder feedback on a discussion paper it has developed entitled "Building Capacity for Local Public Health in Ontario". This initiative follows up on issues that were raised in the recommendations of the Local Public Health Capacity Review Committee (CRC) and aims to engage the sector in a discussion of how health unit capacity can be understood and strengthened. The discussion paper presents a series of characteristics that could be considered as necessary for health unit capacity, and describes a range of capacity-building strategies that could be pursued. An online survey will serve as the vehicle through which stakeholders can provide feedback on the ideas raised in the paper.

We are looking for broad public health stakeholder participation in this initiative, including board of health members, senior leadership, all health unit staff, and staff at public health organizations.

To participate, we invite you to access the survey website at:

www.ph-capacity-survey.ca

From this website, you can download and read the discussion paper (which includes a preview of the survey questions as an Appendix) and then complete the online survey. This survey will be open until **Friday April 3rd 2009.**

It is important that we frame this initiative clearly: the release of the discussion paper and survey does not represent any current government intention to necessarily implement capacity building strategies named in the paper. Rather, this is an opportunity for us to hear from you, as experts in your field, on your perspectives on local capacity challenges and ideas for strengthening public health. We will use these inputs to inform and improve the policy development process for any future government-decision making on these issues.

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Following the release of the CRC report, many stakeholders contacted us to ask for further discussion of the unique challenges they were facing in their health units, and to consider more broadly a full range of ideas, beyond the CRC-recommended amalgamations, that could serve to build capacity in the system. We hope that this current engagement strategy will be an opportunity to begin to formally engage with you in discussion of these complex and challenging issues.

Your assistance, through participating in the survey yourself, and by informing your colleagues of this initiative so that they can participate, would be very much appreciated.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to public health in this province.

Yours truly,



David C. Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Chief Medical Officer of Health (A)
Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Health Protection



Allison J. Stuart
Assistant Deputy Minister (A)

- c: Cynthia Morton, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health Promotion
Monika Turner, Director, Public Health Standards Branch, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Julie Mathien, Director, Early Learning and Child Development Branch, Ministry of Child and Youth Services
Andrew Poslins, Director, Intergovernmental Relations and Partnerships Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing