

## News Release

### **Ontario Public Health Association is pleased about the Minister of Finance's decision to reject the privatization of the LCBO.**

In rejecting the privatization of the LCBO, the Minister of Finance, Greg Sorbara, has indicated his support for public health and safety with respect to alcohol in Ontario. Upon release of the report entitled "Strategy for Transforming Ontario's Beverage Alcohol System" by the Beverage Alcohol System Review (BASR) Panel on July 18, Minister Sorbara supported continued public ownership of the LCBO as being in the best interest of citizens of this province.

Vice-President of the Ontario Public Health Association, Cindy Scythes, expressed OPHA's approval of this stance. "In endorsing public ownership of the LCBO, the Minister has responded positively to the concerns expressed by OPHA when it presented to the Panel in February 2005."

In collaboration with 7 other key organizations such as the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, a joint submission was made to the Panel. The key recommendation was that Ontario should retain intact its public monopoly on alcohol distribution and retail alcohol sales, and extend this to cover beer and wine stores. As well, it was recommended that the LCBO re-balance its current marketing emphasis and take greater account of public health and safety priorities.

Denise De Pape, Chair of OPHA's Alcohol Workgroup stated that although OPHA joins the Minister in rejecting the major recommendation of the BASR Panel report, many of the other recommendations, in the chapters on Social Responsibility, Regulatory Enforcement and Reuse & Recycling, are worthy of consideration. "We look forward to working with the Ontario government in exploring changes to the beverage alcohol retail system, in a manner that protects public health and safety. It is critical that a Public Health voice be involved in such deliberations."

For further information, contact Denise De Pape at 416-338-7515

*Founded in 1949, the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) is a voluntary, charitable, non-profit association. OPHA is an organization of individuals and Constituent Societies from various sectors and disciplines that have an interest in improving the health of the people of Ontario. For more details visit [www.ophan.ca](http://www.ophan.ca).*