

June 19, 2019

The Honourable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Deputy Premier
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
College Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1E9
christine.elliott@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Elliott:

**Re: Letter of Support for Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit
and Proposed Northeastern Boundaries**

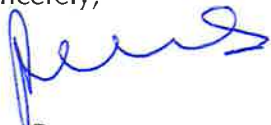
The Board of Health for the Porcupine Health Unit (PHU) is supportive of Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's (SMDHU) letter dated May 15, 2019, to remain intact and join with York Region Public Health to form a new regional Public Health entity on April 1, 2020.

As the largest geographical public health unit in the Province, the Porcupine Health Unit (PHU) is aware of the challenges inherent to ensuring strong and nimble public health coverage while maintaining a local voice and connections.

With the proposed Northeast regional public health entity including the existing five public health units (Public Health Sudbury and Districts, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, Algoma Public Health, Timiskaming Health Unit and Porcupine Health Unit), it will be challenging to ensure the local voice and priorities are represented at the regional level. Increasing this area to over 400,000km² to include Muskoka District will create even further challenges to respond to local public health needs. In addition to concerns with capacity and greater geography, there is a risk of increasing health inequities as the Northeast is unique in terms of socioeconomic status, health status, and health care referral patterns compared to Muskoka District.

The Porcupine Health Unit urges the government to reconsider the proposed boundary for the Northeast regional public health entity and keep Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit intact to join York Region Public Health. We remain committed to ensuring a strong, nimble and locally informed public health system in the Northeast and firmly believe this would contribute to those goals.

Sincerely,



Sue Perras

Chairperson, Board of Health for the Porcupine Health Unit

cc Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Ontario Boards of Health
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Gilles Bission, MMP Timmins-James Bay
John Vanthof, MPP Temiskaming-Cochrane
Guy Bourgouin, MPP Mushkegowuk-James Bay
Porcupine Health Unit Member Municipalities



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