

February 3, 2017

The Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins  
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Hepburn Block, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Hoskins:

### **Opioid Addiction and Overdose**

On January 19, 2017, at a regular meeting of the Board of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, Administration brought forward a letter supported by the Middlesex-London Health Unit regarding improved opioid prescription practices and access to life-saving naloxone.

The Windsor-Essex County Board of Health supported the recommendation from the Middlesex-London Health Unit to better inform Canadians about the risks of opioids, improve prescribing practices, reduce easy access to unnecessary opioids, support better treatment options, and improve the national evidence base. Through collaboration with CPSO, a comprehensive set of guidelines related to counselling, prescribing practices, and naloxone administration would ensure that physicians have the tools needed to address the unnecessary overdose and death associated with the abuse and misuse of these medications.

The Windsor-Essex County Board of Health further commends the Ontario Government on their decision to develop a comprehensive strategy to address opioid misuse and addictions. With increasing rates of opioid prescription and overdose in Ontario, there exists an urgent need to create a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach to prevent the unnecessary deaths caused by the abuse and misuse of opioids. The Windsor-Essex County Board of Health agrees with the stance from Middlesex-London that engagement of physicians through CPSO represents a reasonable starting point to address the issue from the prescription and overdose prevention perspectives. This approach, coupled with improved access to naloxone, will ensure that all opioid users have access to the education and lifesaving medication they need to prevent unnecessary death.

Sincerely,



Gary McNamara  
Chair, Windsor-Essex County Board of Health



Gary M. Kirk, MPH, MD  
CEO & Medical Officer of Health

c: Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario  
Ontario Public Health Association  
Brian Masse, MP Windsor-West  
Dave Van Kesteren, MP Chatham-Kent — Leamington  
Lisa Gretzky, MPP Windsor-West  
Municipal Councils in Windsor-Essex – (County Clerks)  
Windsor-Essex County Board of Health

Association of Local Public Health Agency  
Cheryl Hardcastle, MP Windsor-Tecumseh  
Tracey Ramsey, MP Essex  
Percy Hatfield, MPP Windsor-Tecumseh  
Taras Natyshak, MPP Essex  
Ontario Boards of Health