

To: Delegation during AMO Conference August 2023

From: FONOM Board

Date: August 22, 2023

Subject: Provincial Grant Provided to Northern Ontario Health Units

ISSUE:

Northern Ontario Municipalities are concerned with any reduction of the Provincial Grant provided for Northern Ontario Health Unit funding. Also, if the mitigation funding is decreased, many of our members would face great hardship. Responses from our membership show that Health Unit levies range from 0.79% – 3.23% of a Municipalities' Budget (the average Health Unit levy in Northeastern Ontario is 1.44%).

RECOMMENDATION:

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) requests that the Government of Ontario increase the grant they provide today by moving back to funding levels for Northern Ontario Health Units to the 2018 percentage of 75. Further, the Province again assumes 100% funding for those programs identified as such in the public health budget 2018-19.

ANALYSIS:

The Services provided by the Health Units to our member communities are vital, and with considerable financial support from the Province during COVID, they provided exceptional Health Care to residents. This Government and its Ministries appreciate how vast Northern Ontario is, but the area overseen by the Porcupine Health Unit is 270,000 sq km (note Southern Ontario area is 114,217 sq km).

Many of our communities are geographically isolated, and providing universal Public Health Care is challenging and costly. The Health Units also oversee Public Health in unorganized areas with Provincial funding.

Northern Medical Officers of Health and their Boards have repeatedly asked for increased and sustainable base funding that considers the unique challenges faced in Northern Ontario. It is vital to Public Health to work effectively on the many public health disparities northern residents face. Public Health takes the lead or takes part in many of the foundations for action to improve health equity in the North. Leveling up public health funding and other funding in the North will make Health Units more resilient to the next emergency and allow Northerners to achieve better health overall.

"Under the Health Promotion and Protection Act, since 1997, municipal governments are legally responsible for 100% of public health costs."

The Funding for most of the Health Units programs in the Province was 75% funded by the Provincial Government and 25% by the Unit's Municipal Partners. There were also uniquely funded programs that the Province fully funded. The Units are responsive to the Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability (Standards) set by the Ministries of the Government. The Municipal Partners had representation on the Unit Boards and the Provincial Appointees but had no input on the Standards.

The Provincial Budget 2019 announced that the Government was changing the Grant amount they contribute to the Units. The Budget document stated: *"the current structure of Ontario's public health units does not allow for consistent service delivery, could be better coordinated with the broader system and better aligned with the current Government priorities."* Following the Budget announcement, the Health Units in the North increased their levy by 10% and planned for the same next year, which would have meant a 42% increase by 2021.

The Province also spoke to Public Health Modernization and consolidation. FONOM has previously shared, in August 2020, our opposition and concerns with any amalgamation with the Province.

Then the Government and the Medical Officer of Health worked together, with so many others, to bring the Province through the Pandemic.

Now that the Pandemic is behind us, FONOM wants to share with you that our membership in the Northeastern part of the Province cannot afford any increases more significant than 1.44% (*note that for many, that amount will be a hardship*). There is great concern that any further shift onto small, northern, and rural Ontario municipalities will be a financial burden.

FONOM still believes that public health in Northern Ontario is funded through regular provincial taxation, not property taxation (*especially with an amalgamation*). Until the Government fully assumes Public Health, we ask the Province to move back to funding level Northern Ontario Health Units to the 2018 percentage of 75. Further, the Province again assumes 100% funding for those programs identified as such in the public health budget 2018-19.

Documents

[Northern Ontario Health Equity Strategy](#)

[Being Ready - Ensuring Public Health Preparedness for Infectious Outbreaks and Pandemics –](#)

[Ontario Atlas of Adult Mortality](#)

[Funding Letter from NBPSHU](#)

	2023 increase	% of Annual Budget
NBPSHU		
Parry Sound	0.90%	1.50%
Perry	3%	1.55%
Seguin	6%	0.71%
Mattawan	0.04%	1.00%
Burks Falls	0.98%	0.88%
Callander	0.01%	
McKellar	0.97%	0.79%
Nipissing	-1.02%	1.00%
South River	0.97%	2.49%
Machar	0.96%	
Tem HU		
Cobalt	0.01%	1.50%
Kirkland Lake	2.68%	3.24%
Latchford	1.13%	
Armstrong	1%	
Coleman	0.05%	
Englehart	0.94%	0.98%
Coleman	0.97%	
Evanturel	0.91%	3.30%
McGarry	0.96%	
SUD District HU		
St. Charles	1.20%	1.60%
Killarney	1.12%	
Spanish	0.90%	1.80%
Assiginack	0.91%	0.80%
Algoma HU		
MMA&A		2.55%
Huron Shores	0.89%	0.01%
Wawa		2.09%
Plummer	0.91%	1.79%
St.Josephs	1.16	1.20%
Porcupine		
Hearst	0.97%	1.20%
Kapuskasing		1.50%
Mattice Val Cote	1.05%	
Greenstone	0.00%	0.00%
Smooth Rock Falls	0.96%	0.90%
Hornepayne	0.94%	
Val Rita-Harty		
Renfrew		
South Algonquin	0.10%	