

# The Ontario Association of Public Health Nursing Leaders

## Leading the Way for Public Health Nursing

March 25, 2019

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Premier's Council on Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine

Dear Dr. Rueben Devlin and Council Members,

Re: Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Early Identification: Contribution to Ending Hallway Medicine

On behalf of the Ontario Association of Public Health Nursing Leaders (OPHNL), I applaud the Council's identification of mental health and addictions as priority action areas. The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". Therefore, there can be no health without mental health. Because of its inherent complexity, our health system needs a fulsome approach to mental health which includes mental health promotion, mental illness prevention, early identification and intervention and wrap around treatment services. Public health and public health nurses are mandated to keep people healthy, thereby key allies in efforts to tackle mental health and end hallway medicine.

OPHNL is an independent Nursing Association and represents public health nursing leaders across the province, striving to promote and protect the health of Ontarians through excellence in public health nursing leadership. Positive levels of mental health and resilience are protective factors for physical health, recovery from physical illness, and for reducing harmful behaviours such as problematic use of substances. Public health nurses play a vital role in these areas. We apply a population health approach using epidemiological data to help identify emerging trends and issues. This includes working with people with lived experience and their families or carers to identify needs and inform program development. We build on the strengths of different public health disciplines and health, social services and municipal sectors to bring forward timely and relevant solutions.

We welcome the opportunity to engage with your Council and our government to discuss how public health nurses can further support mental health promotion as we collectively move forward to address mental health and addictions.

Respectfully,



Hamida Bhimani  
President  
Ontario Association of Public Health Nursing Leaders

c.c Hon. Christine Elliott; Minister  
c.c Ms. Helen Angus; Deputy Minister  
c.c. Dr. David Williams; Chief Medical Officer of Health  
c.c Dr. Michelle Acorn; Provincial Chief Nursing Officer  
c.c Mr. Tim Hadwen; Assistant Deputy Minister, Community, Mental Health and Addictions  
c.c. Dr. Robert Kyle; President, Association of Local Official Health Agencies (aLPHa)

Enclosed: Improving and Maintaining the Health of the People: The Contribution of Public Health to Reducing Hallway Medicine (The Association of Local Health Agencies [aLPHa], 2019).