



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **BOARD OF HEALTH CHAIR CLARIFIES BUDGET**

As Chairperson of the Board of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, it is important that I correct the North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce statement regarding the health unit budget.

Firstly, the increase in the total shareable base budget over the last two years was not 11.38% as reported. The increases from the total shareable base reconciled budgets over the past two years amount to 2.9% and 4.8% for 2009 to 2010 and 2010 to 2011 respectively. This represents a 7.7% not 11.38% increase. It is inaccurate and misleading to use any other numbers when calculating increases other than the reconciled budget amounts as unexpended funds are returned to the province and municipalities.

Secondly, the Chamber stated, “the reserves would be used only in a public health crisis”. This too is inaccurate. As per our Board of Health policy, the municipal Reserve is used to address one-time or short-term expenditures, either planned or unplanned. The Reserve is capped at a dollar value equal to 1.5% of the Health Unit's total annual budget for all Health Unit programs.

When making comments on Board of Health budgets and expenditures, it is imperative that one acknowledges and understands the broader picture. The greatest threats to health in our society today are obesity, tobacco and alcohol abuse, and chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease and injuries.

Without significant changes to our health care system, the acute care system will become economically unsustainable. We must have the political fortitude to focus our efforts and health care funding on prevention. As the Chief Medical Officer of Health in Ontario, Dr. Arlene King stresses, “It is time to shift our focus from health care to prevention. Public Health is, quite simply, about prevention.”

Public health is woefully underfunded. Currently in Ontario, The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) estimates that for 2011-2012, public health will receive only 1.5%<sup>1</sup> of the total MOHLTC operating expenses.

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<sup>1</sup>(Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2011)

In the future, the health unit would welcome any inquiries by the Chamber in order to obtain timely, accurate information regarding our finances and the important public health work we do, prior to the Chamber releasing inaccurate statements regarding our budget.

Respectfully,  
Mr. Daryl Vaillancourt  
Chairperson Board of Health  
North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

Ontario Ministry of Finance. (2011, April 19). *Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care - The Estimates, 2011-2012-Summary*. Retrieved February 2, 2012, from Ontario Ministry of Finance:  
<http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/estimates/2011-12/volume1/MOHLTC.html>