

May 28, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford:

RE: Declaring gender-based violence (GBV), intimate partner violence (IPV), and family violence a provincial epidemic.

The Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington (KFL&A) Board of Health passed the following motions on May 22, 2024:

THAT the KFL&A Board of Health endorse the City of Kingston's and Township of Stone Mills' declarations that that intimate partner violence is an epidemic.

AND THAT the KFL&A Board of Health urges the Government of Ontario to declare without delay gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, and family violence an epidemic that warrants a meaningful and sustained society-wide response; to encourage municipalities to address gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, and family violence through provincially legislated community safety and well-being plans; to invest in the necessary resources that support a public health approach to addressing violence in Ontario's communities.

On behalf of the KFL&A Board of Health, I would like to commend the Government of Ontario for their support of Bill 173, *Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic Act*, as a step towards elevating this issue to one of public health importance.

A declaration of an epidemic would support the Government of Ontario's existing plans to address GBV, IPV, and family violence through *Ontario-STANDS: Standing Together Against gender-based violence Now through Decisive actions, prevention, empowerment and Supports* and *Pathways to Safety: Ontario's strategy in response to the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.

Furthermore, we urge you to encourage municipalities to address GBV, IPV and family violence in their provincially legislated community safety and well-being plans, a recommendation from both the Culleton, Kuyzk, and Warmerdan Inquest and the Mass Casualty Commission.

GBV, IPV and family violence are complex, multi-faceted issues that require addressing the root causes and supporting survivors, their children, and their families. The application of a public health approach to violence prevention focuses on maximizing safety and well-being within a population by mitigating upstream factors that increase the likelihood of violence occurring and strengthening the factors that promote healthy relationships. By investing in a public health approach to GBV, IPV and family violence, the Government of Ontario will be better positioned to realize the objectives in *Pathways to Safety* and *Ontario-STANDS* and will support your desire to ensure that declaring IPV an epidemic is not merely a symbolic gesture.

We look forward to opportunities to work together on this urgent public health issue.

Sincerely,



Wess Garrod
KFL&A Board of Health Chair

Copy to: Hon. Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
Hon. Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Hon. Marci Ien, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth
Hon. Michael S. Kerzner, Solicitor General
Ric Breese, MPP Hastings-Lennox and Addington
Ted Hsu, MPP Kingston and the Islands
John Jordan, MPP Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Bryan Patterson, Mayor of Kingston, and City of Kingston Councillors
John Wise, Warden, County of Lennox & Addington; Reeve, Township of Stone Mills
Fran Smith, Warden, County of Frontenac
Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Ontario Boards of Health