

Ministry of Health

Health Promotion and Prevention
Policy and Programs Branch

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July 18, 2019

Dear Dr. Kurji,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of York Region Community and Health Services Department. Your letter was forwarded to me by the Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, for response. We appreciate the information you have shared on child vision screening in York Region.

As you are aware, the government made the decision to maintain the current cost-sharing arrangements for public health this year. As a result, we are not considering waivers at this time.

As a reminder, the Child Visual Health and Vision Screening Protocol, 2018 requires that the board of health shall "provide, or ensure the provision of" vision screening by trained individual(s), as specified by the ministry, for SK students in all schools annually. This wording provides flexibility to boards of health with respect to the potential of working with other partners in support of local implementation of the vision screening program.

In 2019-20, the first year of implementation, we have learned from public health units (PHUs) of their strategies to reach SK students in schools across their areas including program delivery models that incorporate community partnerships. This may involve local Lions Clubs volunteers and nursing students from local colleges. If PHUs leverage community partners to conduct vision screening, it is the PHUs responsibility to ensure that all individuals conducting screening have completed the ministry specified training webinars. Webinar training material is available to PHUs through the ministry Directory of Networks resource pages.

I appreciate your commitment to improving child visual health in York Region and encourage you to explore the feasibility for local partnerships and volunteer involvement that will increase child vision screening in SK classrooms in York Region schools.

Sincerely,

Dianne Alexander
Director, Health Promotion and Prevention Policy and Programs Branch

