



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Bruce Grey Child and Family Services has been navigating the pandemic and service provision to vulnerable families for a year now and through it all Public Health, led by Medical Officer of Health Dr. Ian Arra, has provided continuous, timely and reliable support when it mattered most. From town hall meetings for essential staff to providing support to foster families to advice about service delivery, Public Health has been there for us. We, along with other social service agencies who maintained face to face contact with people have had access to Public Health expertise starting already in February 2020, well before the declaration of the pandemic. We proudly continue to serve while keeping our staff safe and while also meeting the needs of the community.

We shared this challenge with many others – police, food banks, firefighters, charities and the people who served grocery stores, long term care centers, gas stations and the like. A small army of individuals in our region surmounted their personal fears and worries and have continued to work face to face with the public.

We are a region who has demonstrated high compliance with public health recommendations. This is the end result of getting good advice from a trusted source of advice. Dr. Arra and his team focused on support and communication to our entire community and we were inspired to be compliant with this advice. The result of good communication and high trust is low numbers of infection because we are all doing our best to protect ourselves and each other.

The correspondence from Councillor John Tamming to both the board of health and the city's representative on the board, which he has made public, serves to undermine public confidence in the health unit at a time when that confidence is most critical. Our concern is his often baseless comments and conclusions will diminish the public's trust in this invaluable institution and its medical officer of health. It is a dangerous campaign based on innuendo and inference.

Dr. Arra reports to a Board of Directors populated by the region's most competent municipal politicians and provincial appointees. They are individuals who understand accountability and the unique challenges faced by their organization. Many of these individuals are elected and there is a trickle down accountability for the organization that they govern to the electors. I trust that they are fully proficient to evaluate the performance of their Medical Officer of Health and the functioning of the organization. Dr. Arra's compensation is their responsibility and their business.

We are grateful to our staff and foster parents for their outstanding service through the pandemic. BGCFs could not have navigated this experience without the continuous wise counsel of Dr. Arra and his team. We encourage all of the citizens of our region to keep listening to and heeding the advice of our immensely talented and committed Medical Officer of Health and his team. Get immunized when it is your turn and follow the guidelines. The end is in sight.

Phyllis Lovell
Chief Executive Officer

Christine John
Board Chair