

Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care

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HLTC2980IT-2010-1319

AUG 09 2010

Mr. André Marin
Ombudsman of Ontario
Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario
483 Bay Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

Dear Mr. Marin:

As a follow-up to my letter dated July 16, 2010, I am writing to thank you for your report and to inform you about the additional steps the ministry will be taking to address your concerns with respect to the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network's (LHIN) By-law # 2. This will ensure that the LHIN model continues to achieve a high level of transparency, and I am confident that this change is a step further in that direction.

While I agree that education sessions are critical to increasing LHIN board members' knowledge and awareness of the complex health care issues they face, it has always been the view of the ministry that the public must be assured that the LHIN decision-making process is open, accountable and transparent.

As such, the ministry will be advising all LHINs to amend By-law # 2 to change the definition of a board meeting by removing the educational provision.

LHIN boards will also be asked to discontinue the practice of holding closed education sessions and to ensure that all board meetings comply with the requirements set out in the *Local Health System Integration Act, 2006* (LHSIA).

Furthermore, the ministry will continue to work with LHINs to develop policies and guidelines concerning education sessions that are consistent with the requirements in LHSIA, and that contribute to the capacity of LHIN board member knowledge to make informed decisions on health care in their communities, while providing reassurance to the public that continued transparency and accountability are guiding principles for the LHINs.

Sincerely,

Saad Rafi
Deputy Minister