

ONTARIO NURSES' ASSOCIATION

**Consultation on Proposed Amendments to Ontario Regulation 570
(School Health Services and Programs Regulation)
under the *Health Promotion and Protection Act* relating to
the integrated Healthy Smiles Ontario Program
Proposal Number: 15-HLT026**

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

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The Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA) is the union representing 60,000 front-line registered nurses and allied health professionals as well as more than 14,000 nursing student affiliates providing care in Ontario hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, the community, industry and clinics.

While we understand the rationale for these regulatory changes is to support implementation of the integrated Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) Program, ONA has been advised by our members working in public health units that these proposed changes will reduce dental screening in schools and will have a significant impact on low income families who may never see a dentist.

We have been advised that in Algoma and in Sudbury, in particular, that these changes represent a significant cut to existing services that are available to target clients. As a result, we also understand that there are a number of petitions circulating against these proposals in some health units.

Finally, ONA's allied members who work in Dental Programs in Brant County Health Unit will be affected directly by these proposals. We respectfully submit that the government should consult with front-line staff in health units before proceeding further with these proposals. As well, eliminating existing dental programs in health units before the integrated replacement program is fully implemented will mean clients will go without services. This cannot be what the government intended with these proposals.