

Passed by AOHC Board December 6, 2016

AOHC Position Statement on Basic Income

Poverty is the biggest barrier to health. Given the potential to influence the determinants of health, the Association of Ontario Health Centres (AOHC) supports exploration of a Basic Income policy. A Basic Income policy should be explored as part of a comprehensive poverty elimination strategy and social security framework that includes affordable housing; high quality, affordable child care; health benefits; labour law reform to support good jobs and decent working conditions; education and training; and other universal quality programs and services that support increased equity and social inclusion.

Principles to guide design of a Basic Income policy

1. No household should live below the poverty line.
 - Everyone should be better off as a result of a Basic Income program.
 - The benefit level should be set at a level that brings the person/family above the poverty line.

2. There should be no requirement to take part in employment or studies in order to receive a Basic Income.
 - People should not be required to work in order to receive a Basic Income.
 - Incentives to work should be maintained by government. People should be allowed to retain at least 50% of any earned income.

3. A Basic Income program should be administered in a way that is non-stigmatizing, non-intrusive, accessible and responsive.
 - The social assistance programs Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) are intrusive programs with eligibility policing, surveillance, and punitive rules.
 - A Basic Income program should apply without exception to anyone who is now eligible for social assistance.

4. A Basic Income would build on benefit programs that are already working.
 - An Ontario Basic Income would replace OW and ODSP income, but not replace other benefits and supports that people need such as Ontario Drug Benefit and oral health programs, employment supports and access to subsidized housing, and child care.
 - A Basic Income does not remove the need for measures to combat racism, discrimination and other factors linked to inequality.
