

ONTARIO ANNOUNCES NEW CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH*Dr. Arlene King Chosen By All-Party Legislative Committee*

NEWS

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Ontario announced today the appointment of Dr. Arlene King as the province's new Chief Medical Officer of Health, effective June 15, 2009.

Dr. King is currently Director General of the Centre for Immunization and Respiratory Infectious Diseases at the Public Health Agency of Canada.

She has been working in the field of public health since 1992 and has held various positions in communicable disease control at the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, and served as a Medical Officer of Health in Burnaby and Vancouver, B.C.

Dr. King was selected by a special committee of the Legislature, comprised of representatives from all three political parties – as specified in amendments made to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* in 2004.

Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. David Williams will reassume his position as Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Health Protection and Prevention in June.

Dr. Williams has served as the acting Chief Medical Officer of Health since November 2007. His skillful leadership of Ontario province's public health system was clearly evident – particularly during the listeriosis outbreak in 2008.

QUOTES

"As a widely recognized expert in immunization, infectious diseases and pandemic preparedness, Dr. King is a superb choice to take on the public health leadership of this province and to continue the crucial work of safeguarding the health of Ontarians. I'd also like to thank Dr. Williams for leading the province's public health system with such a steady hand during the past 16 months."

- David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

"It's an honour to be taking on the challenges of heading up the largest public health system in the country. A number of substantial steps have been taken in recent years to strengthen public health in the province. I look forward to building on these initiatives and to further improving the health and well-being of Ontarians."

- Dr. King

QUICK FACTS

- The Chief Medical Officer of Health plays a critical role in leading the public health system as a whole – focusing on the legislated obligations as outlined in the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, linking with the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion and providing public health advice both within and beyond government.
- The position of permanent CMOH has been vacant since December 2006 when Dr. Sheela Basrur stepped down from the position.

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