



Town of The Blue Mountains

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OFFICE OF: Mayor Alar Soever
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Sent via E-mail

May 19, 2021

Dr. Ian Arra
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer
Grey Bruce Public Health Unit
1010 17th Street East
Owen Sound, ON N4K 0A5

Dear Dr. Ian Arra:

Re: Letter of Thanks and Support

At its meeting on May 3rd, 2021 the Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains unanimously passed the following resolution:

THAT Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains receives Agenda Item D.5 Municipality of Grey Highlands, D.6 Township of Southgate and D.7 County of Grey regarding support for Grey Bruce Health Unit; AND THAT Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains supports the efforts of Dr. Ian Arra and the Grey Bruce Health Unit, and requests Mayor Soever to write a letter of support to Dr. Arra on behalf of Council and the residents of The Blue Mountains.

I am honoured and pleased to provide the following on behalf of our Council and residents:

Since before the beginning of the pandemic, the Grey Bruce Health Unit under the leadership of Dr. Ian Arra, has been proactive and taken actions which have been highly effective in minimizing the impact of COVID-19 in our community.

The Health Unit staff's efforts have been, and continue to be exceptional, and they have made sacrifices in terms of their personal lives to assist us all in defeating COVID-19. It gives me great pleasure to write this letter to recognize their efforts, and thank not only them, but also their families, for their efforts and sacrifices in helping us defeat COVID-19.

As a relatively small health unit population wise, but one which is geographically large, and which is a popular tourist destination that hosts visitors from many other parts of Ontario, our Health Unit has to deal with many challenges without the benefit of the staffing levels that Medical Officers of Health of larger health units enjoy. We are fortunate to have people as dedicated and hard working as Dr. Arra and his team. Our low case counts and deaths demonstrate that their hard work and leadership has paid off.

Over the last year I have had occasion to work with and correspond with Dr. Arra and his team on a number of COVID related issues. They have worked tirelessly over the past year to put in place and enforce protocols that have kept Grey Bruce safe. The results of this hard work are evident in our relatively low case counts and the fact we have had only five deaths.

Particularly impressive is the fact we have had no major outbreaks in our Long Term Care Homes and Seniors Residences. Unlike most of the rest of Ontario, the few cases we have had, have been quickly contained and isolated through rigorous application of best practice health protocols. In contrast, in most of the rest of Ontario there have been large outbreaks in long term care facilities and many deaths. In addition, through the contact tracing efforts of our Health Unit, cases relating to outbreaks in the community, including one involving our staff, have been quickly isolated and contained. More recently, the Health Unit contact traced over 600 people in a few days, and quickly and effectively contained a spike in cases associated with several social gatherings.

In addition, Dr. Arra and his team have:

- worked tirelessly with our businesses and municipal staff to develop and implement best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- been proactive in working with Chapman's to procure deep freezers so we were set-up to store and deliver the Pfizer vaccine;
- developed the Hockey hub model to transform arenas into mass vaccination sites;
- worked with the province on an endless number of other issues;

All of these achievements and this record of success required a tremendous amount of hard work and dedication on the part of Dr. Arra and his team. I recall multiple occasions when Dr. Arra has called me or responded to my e-mails late at night; a few times the e-mails came after midnight. His staff work just as hard, and I can recall interacting with them as well late at night. We cannot thank you all enough. Once again, please know that you have our support, and thank you for all you continue to do to keep us safe.

Sincerely yours,



Mayor Alar Soever
Town of The Blue Mountains

cc. Grey Bruce Board of Health (via email)
Grey County Council (via email)
Council, Town of The Blue Mountains (via email)
CAO Shawn Everitt, Town of The Blue Mountains (via email)
Tim Hendry, Manager of Communications and Economic Development, The Blue Mountains (via email)
Drew Ferguson, Public and Media Relations Coordinator, Grey Bruce Public Health Unit (via email)
Grey Bruce Municipalities (via email)
Hon. Jim Wilson, MPP Simcoe-Grey (via email)
Hon. Bill Walker, MPP Bruce-Grey (via email)
Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health (via email)

Department File - C2048