

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

Chief Medical Officer Of Health
And Assistant Deputy Minister

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**Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée**

Médecin hygiéniste en chef et
Sous-ministré adjoint

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Tuesday, December 5, 2006

Dear Minister Smitherman,

It is my great regret to inform you that, for health reasons, I have stepped down from the position of Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, effective immediately.

As you may know, I have been off work for the past few weeks due to emergency back surgery. In fact, my back problems were caused by an extremely rare tumour known as a hemangiopericytoma. This is a rare type of vascular tumour, a category which itself comprises only 1% of all cancers. Unfortunately this disease has already spread to other sites and will require many months of further investigation and treatment.

As you might imagine, a decision of this magnitude has been an extremely difficult one for me to make, both professionally and personally. The dual roles of CMOH/ADM have heavy responsibilities that cannot be done by half measures. They demand a more than full-time commitment of energy and dedication to work, carried out under complex and challenging conditions, including but not limited to leadership in times of public health crisis and emergencies.

I have learned so much since my appointment as CMOH/ADM in early 2004 and am just approaching the half-way mark of my legislated 5-year term. I have truly loved the policy & systems perspective afforded by work at the provincial level, and I have never ceased to be amazed by the importance of the issues in my portfolio to the health and well-being of Ontarians. Equally so, I have relished the opportunity to make positive changes, wherever possible, in the working lives of public health and other professionals who deliver such a wide array of important programs and services. I will greatly miss working with so many fine people in the Ontario Public Service, the public health system and beyond, whose dedication, passion and professionalism is truly unparalleled.

George, I want to thank you so much for appointing me to this role and entrusting me with these duties. I have really enjoyed working with yourself, Premier McGuinty and your many Cabinet colleagues and staff. I will always appreciate the personal support you extended to me over the years and hope that some day I may have the opportunity to extend the same to you.

It has been an honour and an immense privilege to serve as Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario. I am confident that the many goals and challenges that lie before us are in good hands, and I extend to you and your colleagues in government my very best wishes for continued success in this worthwhile endeavour.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheela Basur". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Sheela V. Basur
Chief Medical Officer of Health and
Assistant Deputy Minister

Cc: Ron Sapsford, Deputy Minister