



## 2012 Pre-Budget Submission

Family Alliance Ontario is a volunteer, non-profit organization that represents thousands of families who support a person with developmental disabilities. We believe that people with disabilities must have the services and supports they need, within their choice and control, to lead valued and inclusive lives in the community.

For the 2012 budget we request action on the following critical issues to improve services and increase employment opportunities in the sector:

- 1) Reform, or reprioritization of effort, to fully implement the Social Inclusion Act and provide a fair, equitable and accountable support system.**
- 2) Funding to eliminate waiting lists of eligible children and adults for the Special Services At Home and Passport direct-funded programs.**
- 3) Reforms to MOHLTC CCAC support programs to improve support for people who have both disabilities and complex health conditions.**
- 4) ODSP reform to lift people with disabilities out of poverty.**

### 1) Implementation of the Social Inclusion Act.

The economic and social benefits of direct-funded services have been recognized and legislated in the 2010 Social Inclusion Act. However, the implementation of this Act remains agonizingly slow.

In 2004, Developmental Services, recognizing that the current system of support is costly to deliver, inequitable, hard to measure and difficult to manage, began a Transformation process.

Today, seven years on, DS still directs funds through **412 transfer payment agencies** to deliver services with their multiple layers of management, administration and duplicated effort. Most of the funds are consumed before they ever reach the people who need them. The result is that one half of the population of people with developmental disabilities – those supported through agencies – consume 93% of the Developmental Services budget, while the other half – over 12,000 people – depend for support on the remaining 7% through Passport and Special Services At Home.



# Family Alliance Ontario

*representing people with disabilities, their families, and their friends*

The Transformation process, while originally holding great promise, is becoming a mirage. There is no social inclusion in sight, no efficiencies or economies, and no realization of a more equitable, fair and balanced support system. We are told it will take **another five years** just to finish the first round of assessments.

Twelve years to reform a service delivery system is unacceptable to the thousands of individuals and families waiting for services and the opportunity to be included in the community. We believe that it should also be unacceptable to a government that invests \$1.6B into this sector and still cannot adequately measure whether the amount of funding is appropriate, how much support people need, and how funds are being used. These inadequacies were recently highlighted in both the 2009 and 2011 Auditor-General's reports.

**FAO recommends immediate reform and re-prioritization to fully implement the Social Inclusion Act and introduce a fair, equitable support system across the province. We additionally recommend the introduction of adequate accounting controls in the Transfer Payment Agency sector, as recommended by the Auditor General.**

## 2) Passport and SSAH

Despite some additional funding this year, over **7,000 people** remain on the waiting list for support from Special Services at Home – a program that provides respite and personal growth - and **3,500 adults** wait for Passport funding to provide them community participation supports. These two programs are the lifelines for thousands of families and both are chronically under-funded.

While some people assume that support for people with disabilities is an unaffordable drain on the public purse, reality is that the drain happens when adults sit at home all day for want of employment support dollars, when care workers cannot find jobs, when families must give up their careers to stay home with their sons and daughters, and when health care costs rise as stress and caregiver burnout take their toll.

SSAH and Passport are an investment, not a cost. When individuals receive support they use those dollars to create jobs for care workers and participate in the economic life of the community. Some are able to shed their dependency on ODSP and become taxpayers themselves. Relieved of care duties, their families can re-enter the workforce again. Support dollars are not a bottomless pit, they actually create layer upon layer of economic activity.



Importantly, SSAH and Passport are direct-funded programs, a delivery mechanism acknowledged as efficient and economically sound. Payments go directly to those who need without first passing through expensive layers of agency administration and bureaucracy.

Direct-funded programs are recognized by all advanced jurisdictions as being **the most effective and efficient way of delivering services**. In the United Kingdom, direct funding of social care has created such cost-savings that the government has decreed that by 2013, 30% of ALL social care must be delivered in this way, including care of the elderly.

**FAO recommends the elimination of waiting lists for the direct-funded programs, Passport and SSAH in the 2012/13 Budget.**

### 3) MOHLTC CCAC Support

Further on direct funding, the MOHLTC provides in-home support to people with disabilities and complex health conditions through CCACs. Nursing and PSW support hours are subject to maximums imposed by guidelines designed for the elderly and those leaving acute care, very different populations. The maximum support hours are inadequate for people with profound disabilities needing 24/7 care. The approach of delivering lifelong CCAC support via nursing agencies is very expensive and the alternative of placement in a complex care facility even more expensive and undesirable.

Costs can be reduced in CCACs by extending direct funding options and putting care budgets directly under client control. As with Passport and SSAH, clients, or their families, engage their own support workers, who they train and manage, eliminating nursing agency overheads. In one pilot program of which we are aware, costs to the CCAC decreased 25% while the family managed to increase their support hours by 50% by hiring their own workers. These extra hours offered new job opportunities to nurses and Personal Support Workers.

This model builds on the successful program already in use by the Centres for Independent Living.

**FAO recommends the introduction of an optional, province wide direct-funding program through CCACs for people with disabilities and complex health conditions.**



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#### **4) ODSP Reform**

Finally, we anticipate Social Assistance reform in 2012. Investigations into poverty in Ontario inevitably cite that people with developmental disabilities are among the most disadvantaged individuals in our society. Despite the recent 1% increase in rates, the meager amounts of ODSP support condemn adults with developmental disabilities to lead impoverished, inadequate lives at the lowest rung of the economic ladder. We believe this to be discriminatory and unconscionable.

***Family Alliance Ontario requests that the 2012/3 Ontario Budget increases income support to help alleviate the lifelong poverty experienced by adults with developmental disabilities.***

**In summary, we believe that expedited, widespread implementation of direct funded programs can lead to better services and job creation. It will also open the door to social inclusion for the thousands of people with disabilities who wait, impatiently, for the opportunity to become full citizens of Ontario.**

Respectfully submitted.

Barbara McCormack  
President