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Kingston, ON K7L 1G8

Subject: Urgent need for 5% Sector Stabilization Funding for Developmental Services

Dear Ms. Ghamari, Mr. Fraser, and Mr. Hsu,

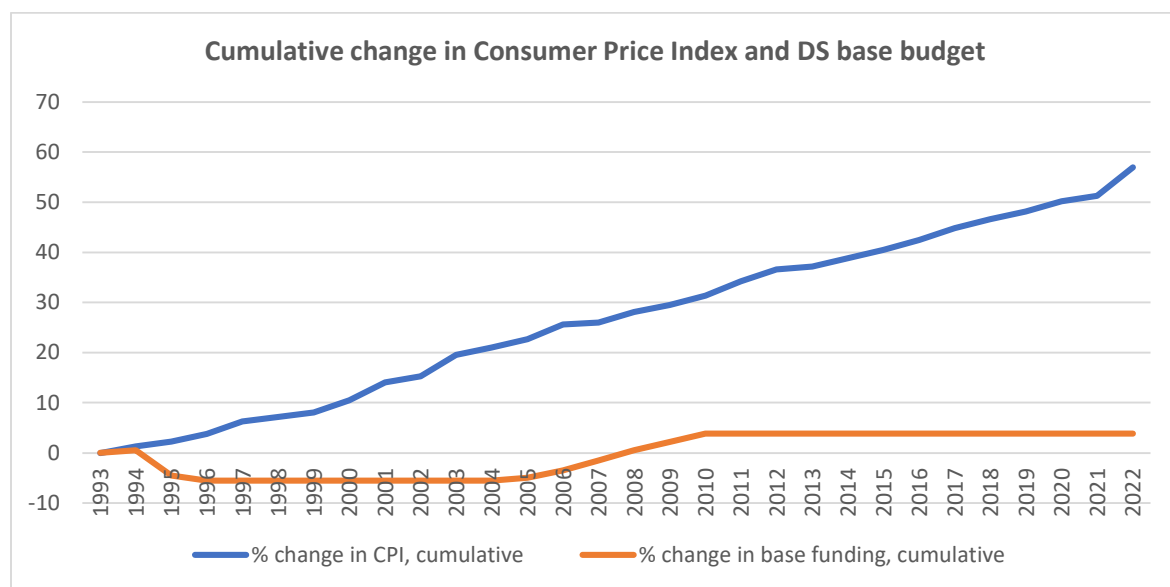
We are a united group of advocates from the Developmental Services (DS) sector comprised of people who have an intellectual disability (self-advocates), families, and DS agencies. We have joined together to advocate for essential changes in the funding and support provided to developmental services.

The DS sector, funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), is facing critical challenges. Instability in the sector requires the government's immediate attention.

Key Issues

Risk to staffing levels

As the below graphic shows, the DS sector has not benefited from any significant cost-of-living increases in MCCSS funding over the past thirty years:



Historic funding disparities have led to significant wage discrepancies in Developmental Services, as compared to health, education, and long-term care. Developmental Services simply cannot compete with these other sectors, which are offering higher wages and consistently drawing workers away from people, families, and agencies in DS.

Fewer staff to respond to growing needs has impacted working conditions. With a province-wide human resource shortage, declining working conditions, and wage disparities, the DS sector is reaching dangerously low staffing levels.

Wage disparity threatens staffing levels, making it increasingly difficult to meet the growing demands for our services.

Risk to sustainability

Funding is not based on actual costs. With inflation, the cost of operating an agency has increased, while funding has not. Base funding increases are not keeping pace with inflation. As a result, some agencies have turned to offsetting revenue through one-time grants and fundraising (et cetera) to support core program expenses. This operational model is not sustainable and increases the risk to the sustainability of some agencies.

Funding inadequacy jeopardizes the sustainability of developmental services.

Risk to vulnerable Ontarians

There is a risk to vulnerable Ontarians due to the pressures noted above. With increased demands, skyrocketing costs, and a human resource crisis, we no longer have a sustainable model for our provincial system of care that ensures the safety and well-being of Ontarians. In fact, some agencies have already been forced to reduce or withdraw services in the face of budgetary pressures.

People with intellectual disabilities bear the greatest risk in the face of a sector in crisis.

Unified Request

While we appreciate the investments made by the government in various health and social service programs, there remain pressing issues that demand resolution. Wage enhancements for DS workers have been extremely helpful in addressing urgent staffing demands. However, there are unintended consequences to these investments, which include:

- Wage disparity between sectors;
- Wage disparity within transfer payment agencies that receive funding from multiple Ministries;
- Wage compression between Developmental Services employees (i.e., supervisors and their direct reports), exacerbating the challenges in recruiting for leadership positions.

Developmental services are community-based and therefore a cost-effective solution within our health and social service systems. The funding issues within MCCSS's funded programs require the government's immediate attention.

Collectively, we seek the following solutions to resolve these and other unintended consequences:

1. Sector Stabilization Funding

We request an immediate 5% increase in Developmental Service agencies' base funding to respond to a sector in crisis. We seek funding that is unrestricted, allowing agencies to address their unique pressures and risks to sustainability.

And we request an immediate corresponding increase in Passport Funding as well as Special Services at home (SSAH) such that people with intellectual disabilities and families can continue to access cost-effective, community-based services.

2. Task Force for a Sustainable Funding Model

We recommend the establishment of an inter-Ministerial task force to develop a long-term, sustainable funding model for the Developmental Services sector.

Conclusion

To further discuss these concerns and solutions in detail, we kindly request a meeting at your earliest convenience. We are eager to collaborate with you to ensure the well-being of Ontarians who rely on the services we provide.

We appreciate your attention to these critical issues. Together, we can create a brighter, more inclusive future for the 100,000+ Ontarians who have an intellectual disability and their families.

Sincerely,

Our  **ICES** Matter

Our Voices Matter Ottawa & Kingston - *Self-Advocacy group*

Carleton

Terry Gaw

Ottawa South

Patricia Morgan

Ray Ellis

Steven Wellbourne

Joe Drouin

Delia Louis

Kingston & the Islands

Aimee Sutton

David Jones

Kevin Parkhill

Lorie Downie

Lisa Laraby