



Formerly Special Services at Home Passport Provincial Coalition (SSAHPC)

1270 Walker Rd, Unit 2
Windsor, ON
N8Y 4T4
pfpfontario@gmail.com

November 8, 2022

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton
Minister of Children, Community, and Social Services
Room 281
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1
MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Fullerton:

Thank you for your November 4, 2022 letter. It seems that you were replying to the June 21, 2022 letter that arose from the collaboration of People for Personalized Funding, Family Alliance Ontario, Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario and The Ontario Independent Facilitation Network.

We await your more specific response to the other letters we sent you on August 9th and October 27th – especially because they offered a solution to the inequity created by your Ministry's implementation of the Permanent Wage Enhancement among recipients of MCCSS Direct Funding.

This inequity is even more obvious and concerning, now that you have told us that your Ministry is giving recipients of Enhanced Respite an 18% increase in annual allocations – because “the direct funding is only intended to support the purchase of respite services from support workers”.

As we have explained in our communications over the past 5 months, there are people who use all (or most) of their Passport and SSAH to purchase services from support workers too. Providing them so much less – a 10% increase, not 18% - is very unfair. Paying their workers the \$3 an hour increase means they will receive fewer hours of support now. Among them are people who face the greatest life challenges, for whom fewer hours can lead to crisis. Others are those whose priority is to expand their opportunities to participate in and contribute to their

communities - leading Ontario into a more inclusive future. Those who are hurt most are those whose funding is so thinly stretched they cannot pay more than minimum wage.

Your letter acknowledged how important it is to “stabilize, attract and retain the workforce needed to provide high-quality care”. People with disabilities and their families greatly value the support workers they hire; we want to ensure they get the same wage enhancement as others, which we thought the Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act required. Your Ministry required families to pass the Temporary Wage Enhancement on to their workers. You have provided that 18% increase so that Enhanced Respite recipients can do so permanently. However, MCCSS has created a situation which puts needy Passport and SSAH recipients at greater risk: to either receive fewer hours of support or reduce the hourly rates they’ve been paying support workers.

We are not proposing an 18% across-the-board increase in Passport and SSAH allocations, because that would still advantage some recipients over others. In our August 9th letter, we wrote:

*At this time of widely-reported staffing shortages, this is one issue that can be resolved quickly. **We ask that you provide recipients the option to continue using the accounting system that has been working well with Passport, when the wage enhancement was temporary. This system should also be made available for families who receive direct funding for children and youth with disabilities. The \$3 wage enhancement would simply be documented on an extra line on their invoices and be fully reimbursed.***

We are now more than half-way through the fiscal year. **Please let us know that you will avert crisis and improve opportunities by resolving this problem now. Thank you.**

Sincerely,

Alison Ouellette and Susann Palmiere, Co-Chairs

Cc:

Monique Taylor - Critic; Children, Community and Social Services
Bhutila Karpoche - Critic; Early Childhood Development
Lisa Gretzky - Critic; Mental Health and Addiction
Lise Vaugois - Critic; Seniors, Persons living with Disabilities and Accessibility
John Fraser - Critic; Children, Community and Social Services
Mary-Margaret McMahon - Critic, Seniors and Accessibility
Family Alliance Ontario
Ontario Independent Facilitation Network
Individualized Funding Coalition of Ontario
Community Living Ontario
The Provincial Network on Developmental Services