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127-2021-7889

October 18, 2021

Ms. Alison Ouellette
Ms. Susann Palmiere
Co-Chairs, People for Personalized Funding
pfpfontario@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Ouellette and Ms. Palmiere:

Thank you for your letter sharing the results of your recent survey concerning Passport funding and your feedback on our government's plan to reform developmental services.

We are committed to listening to families and improving outcomes for people who receive developmental services and supports, and I appreciate your feedback on Journey to Belonging. Our plan is centred around a vision we share with our partners, where people with developmental disabilities belong in their communities and are empowered to make choices and live as independently as possible through person-directed, equitable, and sustainable supports. We engaged widely to develop the plan, and one of the themes we heard is that funding should be fair, flexible and responsive to people's needs, and people should be able to control more of their funding directly.

I would also like to thank you for sharing your survey results from families who receive Passport funding. As you note in your survey, the choice and flexibility of Passport funding enable people to meet various needs simultaneously. One of the key commitments in our plan is developing a person-centred funding approach, enabled by a funding model that will determine funding based on a person's unique assessed support needs.

The objectives of the future funding approach go beyond improving fairness and equity. In line with our vision and principles, our goal is for people to have more choice and flexibility to meet their unique support needs and achieve belonging, whether through managing their direct funding, receiving support from service providers, or a combination of both.

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Alison Ouellette and Susann Palmiere
People for Personalized Funding (PFPF)

I acknowledge your concerns about the timelines outlined in Journey to Belonging and the issues your survey identified for Passport funding and Ontario families. I have heard from others who have also expressed that funding changes are not happening soon enough. I want to emphasize that the magnitude of change required to achieve meaningful reform cannot happen overnight. We need to take the time to get this right and work closely with our partners throughout, including people with developmental disabilities, families and caregivers, service providers and organizations.

I also want to emphasize that while 8 to 10 years will be needed to implement reforms across the system, it does not mean that it will take that long for elements such as a funding approach to be introduced. A key aspect of this work will be testing and prototyping new approaches. As soon as approximately 2 to 3 years, individualized funding could be made available on a limited scale in the early stages of a phased roll-out.

We value the partnership and perspectives of people with developmental disabilities, families and caregivers. We will continue to engage them as we design and start to implement the commitments in our plan. Thank you again for contacting me and sharing this information. I appreciate all the work that you do on behalf of Ontario families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Merrilee Fullerton".

Dr. Merrilee Fullerton
Minister