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### Formerly Special Services at Home Passport Provincial Coalition (SSAHPC)

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June 19, 2023

Hon. Michael Parsa  
Minister of Children, Community, and Social Services (MCCSS)  
7th Flr, 438 University Ave.  
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8  
[MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca](mailto:MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca)

Dear Minister Parsa:

We are writing to express our dismay and deep concern regarding your government's denial of direct funding to people with developmental disabilities. Since Special Services at Home was introduced more than 40 years ago, the Ontario government has known that direct personalized funding enables people to avoid costly segregated services and lead meaningful lives as contributing citizens in their neighborhoods and communities.

What your Ministry has called its Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion was not intended to reach its destination until 2031, but it has now taken another detour.

We have already been waiting fifteen years for the *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act (SIPDDA)* to fully come into effect. As a result of the *SIPDDA* amendments that stemmed from *Bill 91, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act, 2023*, future changes can be made by regulation, without public input. Further worrisome, the amendments indicate no timelines or revised dates for the introduction of a model that promotes direct funding.

Despite what ADM Karen Glass wrote on April 4, 2023, this delay will erode support to people with developmental disabilities:

- She said there will be “no impact on ... Developmental Services Ontario”, despite ample evidence that it is not working now. The Provincial Ombudsman is investigating the DSO yet again; a class action is proceeding on the basis of its ineffectiveness, and it is keeping thousands of eligible Ontario citizens waiting without adequate support.

- Although some additional Special Services at Home funding was announced 3 years ago, it is not serving the number of people intended, and thousands of children and youth are still not receiving funding for which they have been deemed eligible.
- Although it should be clear that increased direct funding is desperately needed and bureaucratic obstacles must be eliminated, Ms Glass said the Passport program will remain unchanged.
- It is a horrible disservice that the 2023 provincial budget provided no additional SSAH and Passport funding but provided \$12 million for 14 additional spaces in Safehaven's segregated residential program.
- Contrary to Ms Glass' announcement, Developmental Services is perpetuating a system that is *NOT* "fair, flexible and responsive to each individual's unique needs and goals".

The information MCCSS Director Christine Kuepfer provided at an April 24<sup>th</sup> webinar was also discouraging:

- Your government is paying KPMG millions of dollars to evaluate the costs of a segregated service system that cannot prove its effectiveness but continues to resist change.
- You paid for "housing navigators" but not for the support people need to live in their own homes.
- Changes were made to restrict how people use Passport funds, not to ensure their lives improve.
- Despite its "See My Abilities" social media campaign, your Ministry has created more systemic barriers that limit people's opportunities.

We ask that your Ministry promote robust and adequate, direct and personalized funding now. Implemented properly, it is the best way to promote inclusion and choice, respecting all of the principles that are meant to guide Developmental Services reform. Please set an immediate date to change legislation and increase funding. No one's "journey to belonging" should be delayed.

Sincerely,

Alison Ouellette and Susann Palmiere, Co-Chairs of People for Personalized Funding

Cc:

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