



## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** October 26, 2011

**To:** All OPSEU Members in the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

**From:** Roxanne Barnes, Chair, Ministry of Community and Social Services Enforcement and Renewal Committee

**Subject:** Potential Downloading of ODSP

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Three different processes that threaten our jobs and the services we provide are now underway:

- 1) The Commission for the Reform of Social Assistance is examining the social assistance system to make recommendations that are supposed to improve the situation for the clients;
- 2) Retired banker Don Drummond has been asked by the McGuinty government to look at all public services funded by government and make recommendations about what programs should be cut, privatized or delivered by another level of government or the non-profit sector. These recommendations are to be delivered in time to be incorporated into the 2012 provincial budget; and
- 3) The Deputy Minister of Government Services, Bob Stark, wants to integrate social assistance, including ODSP, and other provincial, municipal and federal programs into ServiceOntario.

Your MERC team, along with the Chair of the ODSP Sub-committee and the Job Security Officer, met with Commissioners Frances Lankin and Munir A Sheik of the social assistance review on Oct. 12.

We presented our submission which can be found on the OPSEU website <http://www.opseu.org/ops/ministry/comsoc.htm> . We also sent a submission to the Ontario Federation of Labour.

At our presentation, the Commissioners told us that one of the options they are considering is recommending that the delivery of ODSP be downloaded to the municipalities.

We were shocked to hear this and we told them emphatically that this is bad public policy. ODSP and Ontario Works are two programs with different mandates, each serving clients with distinct needs. ODSP was created to meet the unique needs of people with disabilities. The focus is more on community inclusion, than on obtaining competitive employment. We strongly believe operational improvements need to be made to ODSP, however, the answer is not to download the program to municipalities.

The Commissioners invited us to put together “a business case” as to why we think that ODSP should remain delivered by the province. This week we are finalizing this document. We have four members including myself working on the document along with a campaigns/communications officer, a researcher and our job security supervisor and officer.

**We need to stand up and fight for our jobs and our clients now.**

We will keep you up to date when we hear of any new information. I urge you all to lobby your MPPs, the new Minister, John Milloy, the Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister, all the way down to local managers and explain why you think the province should continue to delivery ODSP.

If you have any questions please contact your MERC or ODSP Subcommittee members.

In Solidarity,

Roxanne

Roxanne Barnes  
MERC Chair MCSS

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