

SCHEDULE A – SUMMARY OF DISCRETIONARY BENEFITS

No	Benefit or Service	Health	Non health	Application/ Detail
1	Basic dental services for OW adults and ODSP dependent adults	Yes		OW adults are eligible for basic dental services as per MCSS Schedule of Dental Services and Fees and the MCSS Schedule of Services and Fees for Dental Hygienists Who Self-Initiate as well as approval from the Dental Plan Administrator for “pre-determination” of any procedures that exceed \$400 per treatment plan
2	Dentures	Yes		Coverage for a maximum of \$750 per upper and \$750 per lower denture for OW and ODSP clients, every 5 years, when prescribed to relieve pain or for medical or therapeutic purposes or to increase employability.
3	Vision care for OW adults and ODSP dependant adults	Yes		Coverage for a maximum of \$250 in a 24 month period for the cost of vision care and an additional \$200 within the 24 months for the replacement of lenses if there is a change in prescription. Glasses may also be replaced if lost or destroyed at a cost up to \$200 during the 24 month period.
4	Prosthetic Appliances	Yes		Coverage for the cost of prosthetic appliances not covered under any other program up to a maximum of \$300 per item. Coverage includes braces, orthotics alerting devices for hearing impaired and air conditioners for respiratory or other severe medical conditions.
5	Hearing Aids and batteries	Yes		OW Adults and dependent children are eligible for up to \$500 per hearing aid in a 3 year period; and for on-going costs of hearing aid batteries up to \$15/month and for an additional \$500/ 3 year period for the replacement of hearing aids if there is a change in prescription.
6	Travel and Transportation		Yes	<p>Coverage for a subsidy of \$34/ month for OW and ODSP adults, not eligible for other funding to purchase a monthly City transit pass.</p> <p>Coverage for the reasonable and cost effective transportation costs to assist a recipient to move to another municipality</p> <p>Coverage for the transportation costs for clients to attend court in another municipality for the purposes of pursuing spousal or child support and</p> <p>Coverage for the travel costs for an OW or ODSP client to attend a hospital or funeral for a parent, child or sibling.</p>
7	Basic funeral and burials services	Yes		Maximum fees include: up to \$2,250 towards funeral services and up to \$1,000 towards the cost of cemetery and burial fee; cost of the crypt if required by cemetery.
8	Baby Supplies and equipment	Yes		<p>Benefits to include infant car seat to a maximum of up to \$125 and booster seats up to \$50 once per family (unless multiple children are in car seats at the same time)</p> <p>Coverage also includes cost of a CSA approved crib to a maximum of \$200 once per family (unless multiple children are in cribs at one time) and the cost of purchase or rental of breast pumps.</p>
9	Paternity testing		Yes	Covers the cost of DNA testing of OW recipients and the dependent child to establish paternity in order to pursue child support – one time only, with the intent of recovering costs.

SCHEDULE A – SUMMARY OF DISCRETIONARY BENEFITS

No	Benefit or Service	Health	Non health	Application/ Detail
10	Prescription Drugs	Yes		Covers the cost of prescribed medications for benefit unit members of OW and ODSP when cost not covered under Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Drug formulary and there is no alternative that can be prescribed for up to three months
11	Moving and storage costs		Yes	Covers up to \$500 once in a calendar year towards the reasonable costs of moving and/or storage fees less any amount previously issued in the preceding 24-month period under the mandatory benefit "Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit."
12	Home repairs for OW families who own their own homes	Yes		Up to \$3,000 for necessary repairs for the preservation and maintenance of the dwelling place when no providing the support would be to the detriment of the health and wellbeing of the client or dependants. This benefit is available one in a lifetime but additional occurrences may be considered under exceptional circumstances by a supervisor.
13	Vocational training		Yes	Consider on a case-by-case basis if not eligible under mandatory benefits or employment related expenses.
14	Birth Verification		Yes	To assist with the cost of obtaining a birth certificate only up to the amount following the fees of the Ontario Office of the Registrar General for dependent children of OW or ODSP, once per child
15	Replacement or repair to fridge or stove	Yes		Up to \$200/ appliance in a 12 month period for the replacement or repair of a fridge or stove
16	Replacement of household contents in an emergency situation	Yes		Up to \$200/ member of the family per event for the replacement of personal effects in emergency situations, such as floods or fires, when other benefits and insurance are not available.
17	Rent deposits	Yes		Covered for OW or ODSP clients, if deposit required as condition of tenancy and other mandatory benefits are not available, up to maximum shelter allowance under OW Reg 42.
18	Heat and utility deposits or payment to prevent eviction or disconnection of services	Yes		Covers up to \$600 per service or \$1,200 if the heat and utility are with the same service provider, in a calendar year less the amount previously issued in the preceding 24 month period under the mandatory benefit "Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit."
19	Recreation and social activities subsidies for children		Yes	Provides up to \$200 per OW or ODSP dependent child in a calendar year to participate in recreational or social activities.
20	2008 only Children's Fall Health Benefit	Yes		Provides \$250/child on OW or ODSP for warm seasonal clothing and funding for social inclusion in community activities.



TO: Members of the Joint Services Steering Committee

FROM: Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services

MEETING DATE: October 11, 2012

SUBJECT: Report CSSSJSSC12-006
Discretionary Benefit Funding Report

PURPOSE

A report to update the Committee members on discretionary benefits and to provide details and options for consideration during the 2013 budget deliberations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Joint Services Steering Committee endorse the recommendations outlined in Report CSSSJSSC12-006 dated October 11, 2012, of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

- a) That to comply with a July 30, 2012 City Council direction, the initial 2013 draft operating budget for Social Services be prepared on the basis that the City and County's municipal contribution for Discretionary Benefits not be increased over the 2012 budgeted amounts;
- b) That Schedule A of the current Discretionary Policy effective January 1, 2013 be restricted to the following health related benefits: adult basic dental, hearing aids, adult vision care, prosthetic appliances and the mandated costs required of the municipality to dispose of an unclaimed body.
- c) And that the Joint Services Steering Committee recommends that both Councils consider the options for additional benefits coverage as outlined in this report.

- d) That the OW Administrator be delegated the authority to revise the specific dollar value of items contained within Schedule A of the Discretionary Benefit policy, increase eligibility wait times and provide benefits on time limited basis through the year, as necessary to remain within annual approved budgets.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2013 draft budget will assume no increase in the City and County Discretionary Benefits cost over the 2012 budget amount of \$226,033 and \$55,333 respectively.

If all of the options recommended for consideration in this report are added to the 2013 budget, it would result in an additional expense of \$599,987 for the City and \$103,216 for the County, which would result in a 2013 tax levy increase and/or draws from reserves.

BACKGROUND

The Ontario budget resulted in changes to the cost share formula for the Discretionary Benefit Program effective July 1, 2012. In addition to the capping of discretionary health benefits, the removal of Community Start Up and Maintenance Mandatory Benefit (Community Start Up) and the elimination of the Home Repair Benefit will put additional pressures on housing and homelessness services. Clients and community partners who benefited from these services will struggle as less money is available to help our most vulnerable residents.

Social Services staff presented Report CSSSJSSC12-004 to Joint Services Steering Committee (JSSC) on June 14, 2012 and Report CSSS12-007 to City Council on July 23, 2012. Staff was asked to report back to the next Joint Services to update on any dialogue with the Province, to provide further analysis of the impact of the changes in the funding model on the municipality, and consideration of the options dealing with the impact of the reduction in funding.

Further changes may result in this or other areas of social assistance as a result of the report from the Social Assistance Review Advisory Commission due in the fall of 2012.

Dialogue with the Province

A letter dated August 9, 2012 was sent to the Premier on behalf of the Mayor and Warden. See Appendix A. Staff met with local ODSP managers to discuss the implications of changes to discretionary benefits for ODSP clients. Future meetings are scheduled to update the local ODSP staff of any final decisions regarding changes to discretionary benefits and homelessness programs.

At the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference in August, the Division Manager and City Councillors had several opportunities to discuss municipal concerns with provincial cabinet ministers. These dialogues are not expected to change the decision regarding the Discretionary Benefits cap; however, it did provide opportunities to express the municipality and community's concerns regarding the funding cut backs and to emphasize the importance of considering these impacts in future changes to Social Assistance.

2013 Discretionary Benefit Budget Preparation

At its meeting held July 30, 2012, City Council passed the followed resolution:

that the initial 2013 draft operating budget be prepared on the basis that the City and County's municipal contribution for Discretionary Benefits not increase over the 2012 budgeted amounts.

As a result, within the draft 2013 budget, the City municipal cost is \$226,033 and the County contribution is \$55,333.

To calculate the maximum amount of provincial revenue available and municipal contribution required under the new funding cap the following formula is applied:

$$(Monthly\ OW + ODSP\ Caseload) \times \$10\ per\ month \times 12months$$

For 2013, the provincial cost share to the cap for this program is 85.8%. The most recent Ministry calculations and staff caseload projections (8244) result in an estimated gross cost of \$989,280 with a provincial subsidy of \$848,803. The municipal portion is split City \$118,001 and the County \$22,476. The municipal split is based on historical expenditures excluding transit - City 84% and 16% County.

Range of Discretionary Benefits

To achieve Council's initial budget request, gross City expenditures cannot exceed \$939,027 and \$191,142 for the County. Appendix B summarizes the categories of additional benefits that are being presented for consideration.

Core Benefits (Category 1-Column 3 of Appendix B)

If discretionary benefits are reduced to those outlined in Category 1 then projected expenditures will be within the amount directed by Council. Staff recommends the provision of these health related benefits be the priority within the existing budget amount. The costing of this category includes a proposed change for funeral & burials reducing the level of service to those mandated costs to cover burial expenses for unclaimed bodies of people who died within our municipality. Social Services will no

longer assist families with the cost of a basic funeral or burial as part of this cost saving measure.

The loss of the other benefits will negatively impact the health and social well-being of families on social assistance. Based on their current level of assistance, families do not have extra money to pay the added cost of items and services previously covered. Council may wish to consider also investing in some or all of the benefits in Categories 2 to 5 as a means to mitigate the severity of service cuts that have resulted from reduced provincial investment.

Dentures (Category 2 –Column 4 of Appendix B)

The availability of dentures has allowed dentists more options when determining the appropriate treatment plan for their patient. Having dentures also improves the employability of clients who would otherwise be without teeth. In 2012, approximately 144 people are projected to receive funds towards the cost of dentures. To continue a discretionary benefit towards the cost of dentures will require additional municipal costs of \$178,987 from the City and \$45,616 from the County.

If the Committee wishes to have both Councils consider the inclusion of Dentures then the following recommendation should be endorsed:

That dentures to social assistance clients continue to be covered under Schedule A as a 100% municipal cost with projected expenditures of \$178,987 for the City and \$45,616 for the County.

Emergency Housing Benefit (Category 3-Column 5 of Appendix B)

In 2011, Community Start Up Benefit provided \$2.8 million to OW and ODSP clients in Peterborough to prevent homelessness and assist with a wide number of housing situations. Under the new Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI), it is projected only 22% of the original amount spent on Community Start up will be available to assist with the same need in 2013. This will leave social assistance families in precarious housing situations if they are unable to pay their costs. Emergency housing issues like the recent fire on Milroy Drive show that when all other funding is spent, it is prudent to maintain a fund that allows for a timely response in the face of emergency need. It is recommended that a discretionary benefit that would assist some Social Assistance recipients with the most urgent of housing needs be provided. An additional municipal budget of \$164,000 from the City and \$36,000 from the County is requested.

If the Committee wishes to have both Councils consider the provision of the benefits contained in Category 3 then the following recommendation should be endorsed:

That a 100% municipal emergency housing benefit for social assistance clients under Schedule A be established at a cost of \$164,000 for the City and \$36,000 for the County.

Recreational/Social Subsidies (Category 4 –Column 4 of Appendix B)

Families living in poverty do not have extra income to provide opportunities for their children to be involved in social/recreational activities. Some of the programs may provide subsidies but in situations where this is not possible, this fund could assist parents in paying at least some of the fees required. To continue a discretionary benefit towards the cost of social and recreational subsidies for children of Ontario Works and ODSP families an additional municipal budget of approximately \$82,000 from the City and \$18,000 from the County is requested.

If the Committee wishes to have both Councils consider the provision of the benefits contained within Category 4 then the following recommendation should be endorsed:

That a 100% municipal social/recreational benefit under Schedule A for social assistance dependent children be established at a cost of \$82,000 for the City and \$18,000 for the County.

Transit Subsidies (Category 5 –Column 7 of Appendix B)

Currently, discretionary benefits subsidize transit passes for approximately 13% of OW and ODSP clients with the rider contributing \$21 per month towards the monthly transit pass, valued at \$55. In 2011, Social Services paid just under \$400,000 towards an average of 978 monthly bus passes which generated revenue to City transit of approximately \$650,000. This represented 31% of the adult ridership for the municipal system. For the first half of 2012, that ridership has grown to 36% representing an average of 1088 monthly passes.

In 2011, county clients began accessing this subsidy averaging 10 monthly passes and increasing to 15 per month for the first six months of 2012. For the first six months of 2012, social assistance riders averaged 45 trips per month.

Social Services staff met with City transit staff to explore transit options. Staff recommends that with any of the transit options, a contribution still be required from the rider. The amount of the rider portion may need to be re-assessed depending on the outcome of the recent transit review that recommends a fare increase in 2013. It is recommended that the previous monthly pass be replaced with a 30 day pass. Since the 30 days counts from the point of activation individuals may only require 10 or 11 passes in a given year. Increasing the portion required by the user will likely result in fewer people being able to access this option and therefore it is recommended a second alternative of a 20 trip ticket costing the client \$20 dollars and a subsidy from Social Services of \$15 dollars be provided.

Proving these two options will assist with meeting some of the identified gap for transportation needs not related to medical and employment reasons for people on Social Assistance. The recommended subsidy from the social services budget is \$175,000 annually from the City and \$3,600 from the County.

- a) Provide a 30 day pass each month at a cost of \$55 with the rider paying \$30 and the remaining \$25 subsidized by Social Services.
- b) Provide one 20 trip pass per month at a cost of \$35 with the rider paying \$20 and the remaining \$15 subsidized by Social Services. If this option is chosen then Transit be directed by Council to establish this new fare structure.

Chart 2 City Transit Options							
Option	Transit Options	Rate	Rider portion	Estimated No of Passes	Payment from Rider	Social Services Subsidy	Transit Revenue
A	30 Day Pass	\$55	\$30	4,000	\$120,000	\$100,000	\$220,000
B	20 Trip Pass	\$35	\$20	5,000	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$175,000
County Transit Options							
Option	Transit Options	Rate	Rider Portion	No. of Passes	Payment from Rider	Social Services Subsidy	Transit Revenue
A	30 Day Pass	\$55	\$30	90	\$2,700	\$2,250	\$4,950
B	20 Trip Pass	\$35	\$20	90	\$1,800	\$1,350	\$3,150

If the Committee wishes to have both Councils consider some form of a transit subsidy then the following recommendation should be endorsed:

That \$100,000 100% City funding be allocated to provide subsidized 30 day transit passes at \$55 to an estimated 4,000 social assistance riders for the calendar year. That \$2,350 100% County funding be allocated to provide subsidized 30 day City transit passes at \$55 to an estimated 90 transit riders for the calendar year (Option A);

and

That \$75,000 100% City funding be allocated to provide subsidized 20 trip transit passes at \$35 to an estimated 5,000 social assistance riders for the calendar year. That \$1,350 100% County funding be allocated to provide subsidized 20 trip City transit passes at \$35 to an estimated 90 transit riders for the calendar year (Option B)

Should this transit option be supported then City Council will need to direct transit to create a new fare option of a 20 trip ticket and the recommended rate for this fare is \$35.

SUMMARY

Changes to the Provincial Discretionary Benefits Funding formula have resulted in a significant loss of Provincial Subsidy. This report outlines the cost of various benefits and provides options for consideration as part of the 2013 budget process.

As outlined in Recommendation D of this report, the Social Services Division Manager, in her role as OW Administrator, will revise the local procedures based on the approved policy and set out the eligibility criteria and amounts that allow expenditures to remain within approved annual budgets.

Submitted by,

Ken Doherty
Director of Community Services

Linda Mitchelson
Social Services Division Manager

Contact Name:

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Attachments:

- Schedule A – Summary of Discretionary Benefits
- Appendix A – Categories of Benefits for Consideration Summary
- Appendix B – Letter to Premier McGuinty (dated Aug. 9/12) from Daryl Bennett, Mayor / J. Murray Jones, Warden
- Appendix C – Letter to Daryl Bennett, Mayor / J. Murray Jones, Warden (Aug. 27/12) from the Premier of Ontario
- Appendix D – Letter to Daryl Bennett, Mayor / J. Murray Jones, Warden (Sept. 24/12) from the Ministry of Community and Social Services

Description Col 1	2012 Approved Budget Col 2	2013 Draft Budget "Core Program" Col 3	Potential Enhancements to Core Discretionary Program			
			Dentures Col 4	Emergency Housing Col 5	Social Recreational Col 6	City Transit Col 7
Gross Expenditures	2,391,978	1,130,169	224,603	200,000	100,000	178,600
Province Share	2,110,612	848,803	0	0	0	0
Municipal Share	281,366	281,366	224,603	200,000	100,000	178,600
City Share	226,033	226,033	178,987	164,000	82,000	175,000
County Share	55,333	55,333	45,616	36,000	18,000	3,600
<u>Details</u>	Benefits Covered OW Adult Basic Dental, OW Hearing Aids, OW Adult Vision Care, Prosthetic appliances, mandated burial costs.	Benefits Covered OW Adult Basic Dental, OW Hearing Aids, OW Adult Vision Care, Prosthetic appliances, mandated burial costs.	Benefits Covered Dentures (For OW and ODSP clients up to a maximum amount in a 5 year period.)	Benefits Covered Emergency Housing Benefit-(To prevent eviction and disconnection of services)	Benefits Covered Social Recreation subsidies (Assist towards cost of registration for children and youth)	Benefits Covered Transit subsidies (Assist towards the cost of City transit fare.)



City of Peterborough

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705-742-7777 Ext. 1870



County of Peterborough

470 Water St.
Peterborough, ON
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705-743-0380 ext. 328

August 9, 2012

Premier Dalton McGuinty
Legislative Building
Queens, Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier McGuinty;

In the 2012 Ontario Budget, the government made changes impacting how the Province and Municipal delivery agents will share the cost of Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits beginning July 1, 2012. Of immediate concern is the timing of these changes when municipal budgets had already been approved for 2012. Also announced at that time was the plan to eliminate the mandatory Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) effective January 1, 2013.

The City of Peterborough is the service delivery agent for the Ontario Works Program for the City and County of Peterborough. These two changes result in an approximate \$2.9 million reduction in revenue and benefits to people in this community. On June 14, 2012, the Joint Services Steering Committee for the City and County of Peterborough endorsed a recommendation to send this letter on behalf of the City and County to express concerns with the financial impact these decisions will have on our most vulnerable citizens, municipal budgets, and the government's ability to continue with its commitment to reduce poverty.

This announcement came at a time when the City was putting together a local solution to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) decision to cease funding to the Peterborough Employment Resource Centre, (PERC) which is delivered by the City of Peterborough. This represents a reduction of approximately \$500,000. There is concern that this will result in service gaps that will especially impact social assistance clients where the Employment Ontario service providers do not have the capacity to meet these additional needs. City and County Councils responded by approving additional municipal funding to offer a reduced level of services for one year.

Peterborough has advocated for transitioning many of the health related discretionary benefits to mandatory benefits, which are currently delivered at the discretion of each delivery agent, and to be consistently made available across the province as part of the financial upload to the province. Basic health benefits such as emergency dental care, vision care and hearing aids for adults of Ontario Works should be seen as non-optional, as they are crucial to help the individual mitigate barriers that prevent

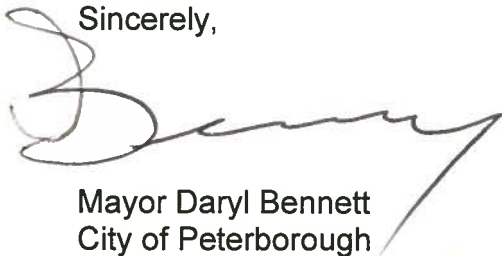
successful reintegration to sustainable employment. As part of the government's goal to reduce poverty and improve the well being of its citizens, these benefits ideally would be extended to low income individuals provided through MOHLTC, similar to the Trillium Drug Program.

The actions of the government have placed municipalities in the difficult position of reducing these services or bearing a greater share of the cost to maintain these critical benefits. While we appreciate the government's commitment to the current upload of benefits by 2018, there is a misconception that the upload will more than offset the cost cuts. Given the amount of the reductions we believe this not to be the case and, in effect, this is a download to the municipalities. The new funding cap decision needs to be reversed immediately for the Provincial Government to remain consistent with the intent of the Provincial Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review.

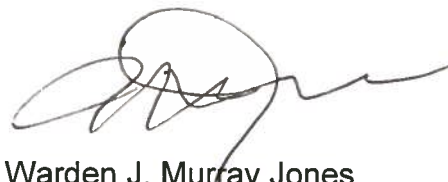
Recently we received the letter outlining the local allocations to the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) for 2013-2014. We are pleased there is some recognition of variation of core housing needs across the province; however the allocation is lower than expected, given Peterborough has the highest severe core housing need in the province. We are concerned that the changes associated with the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit, Discretionary Benefits, and the CHPI allocation will leave our community with a reduction in funding. This poses extreme challenges in meeting the needs of the people in the community.

We request any action impacting the discretionary benefit program be delayed pending the release of the Social Assistance Review Commission report and discussions with AMO. We look forward to the Provincial Government providing ongoing consideration to the needs of the most vulnerable, sufficient financial supports for social services, and planning in a collaborative way with municipalities.

Sincerely,



Mayor Daryl Bennett
City of Peterborough
500 George St. N.
Peterborough, ON
K9H 3R9



Warden J. Murray Jones
County of Peterborough
470 Water St.
Peterborough, ON
K9H 3M3

Copies to:

Jeff Leal, MPP
Laurie Scott, MPP
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA)

The Premier
of Ontario

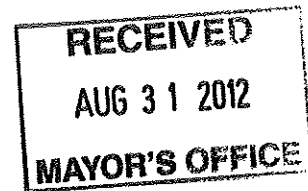
Legislative Building
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Le Premier ministre
de l'Ontario

Édifice de l'Assemblée législative
Queen's Park
Toronto (Ontario)
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August 27, 2012



His Worship Daryl Bennett
Mayor, City of Peterborough
Mr. J. Murray Jones
Warden, County of Peterborough
500 George Street North
Peterborough, Ontario
K9H 3R9

Dear Mayor Bennett and Warden Jones:

Thank you for your letter regarding recent changes related to the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit, Discretionary Benefits, and the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative allocation. I appreciate your taking the time to share your concerns with me.

As your comments fall under the area of responsibility of my colleague the Honourable John Milloy, Minister of Community and Social Services, I have shared a copy of your correspondence with him. I have asked the minister to respond to you directly.

Mayor Bennett and Warden Jones, thank you again for writing. Please accept my best wishes.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dalton McGuinty'.

Dalton McGuinty
Premier

c: The Honourable John Milloy



Ministry of Community
and Social Services

Minister's Office
Hepburn Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1E9
Tel.: (416) 325-5225

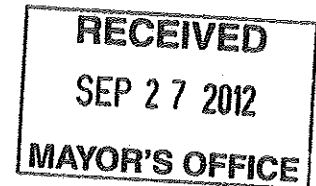
Ministère des Services
sociaux et communautaires

Bureau du Ministre
Édifice Hepburn
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SEP 24 2012

His Worship Daryl Bennett
Mayor
City of Peterborough
500 George Street North
Peterborough, Ontario
K9H 3R9



Mr. J. Murray Jones
Warden
County of Peterborough
470 Water Street
Peterborough, Ontario
K9H 3M3

Dear Mayor Bennett and Warden Jones:

Premier Dalton McGuinty forwarded your letter regarding social assistance in Ontario. I appreciate the time you have taken to write and I welcome the opportunity to respond.

Our government is always looking for ways to improve our programs to better support clients. There are currently over 800 rules and regulations that govern social assistance benefits. We have asked the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario to find ways to make social assistance simpler, easier to understand and financially sustainable.

While we look forward to their final report, we felt it was important to address funding of discretionary benefits now to help make our social services supports sustainable over the long term while ensuring that the system continues to be there for those who need it.

In 2010–11, spending on Ontario Works discretionary benefits increased by about six per cent over the previous year. We are making changes to Ontario Works discretionary benefits to make them more accountable by introducing additional spending controls.

There will continue to be a range of needs that can be addressed through discretionary benefits. Ontario Works delivery agents will continue to set local policies based on the prioritization of their clients' needs.

.../cont'd

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Please be assured that we remain committed to uploading the cost of Ontario Works by 2018 to protect municipalities from uncertainty and volatility in program costs. This will save municipalities \$425 million by 2018.

With respect to employment services for social assistance clients, we are currently working with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) and our Ontario Works delivery partners with a view to better integrating employment services to improve employment outcomes for social assistance clients and persons with disabilities while making the best use of resources.

We recognize the important role that our Ontario Works delivery partners play in delivering social services. We will continue to engage you as we move forward with exploring opportunities for integrating social assistance employment services with the broader Employment Ontario network.

With respect to your concerns about the allocation under the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI), I have taken the liberty of forwarding your letter to my colleague, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, for her consideration.

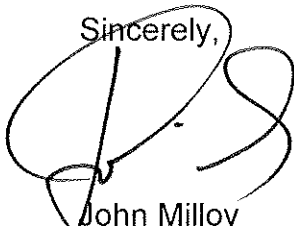
Regarding your comments about extending emergency dental care, vision care and hearing aids to low-income individuals, I have shared your letter with my colleague the Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, for her information.

Given the scope of the fiscal challenges facing the province, all ministries, including the Ministry of Community and Social Services, need to ensure that programs are fiscally sustainable. This is necessary to help us protect the services that Ontario families rely on and maintain the improvements we have made in health, education and social services.

While we know we still have more work to do, our government is committed to making positive changes.

Once again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



John Milloy
Minister

c: Premier Dalton McGuinty
Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care