

COCHRANE DISTRICT
HUMAN SERVICES AND JUSTICE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

2012-10-15

The Honourable John Milloy, Minister
Community and Social Services
Legislative Bldg.
Rm. 223
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

Dear Minister Milloy,

As a result of the 2012 Provincial Budget, effective January 1, 2013, the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) will no longer exist within Ontario Works or ODSP. This matter was discussed at the September 2012 (CD-HSJCC) Cochrane District - Human Services & Justice Coordinating Committee meeting.

HSJCCs were created by the province in response to a recognized need to coordinate resources and services across Ministries and sectors, and plan more effectively for the priority population at different junctures. Locally, the CD-HSJCC was established in response to a recognized need to coordinate resources and services, and plan more effectively for people with clinical needs who are in, or have the potential to be, in conflict with the law.

Recipients of OW and ODSP benefits regularly require care, services and supports which cross all Ministries and sectors represented at HSJCCs and as such our committee felt compelled to communicate our concerns to you.

It is our understanding that this benefit is currently a mandatory benefit that is provided to recipients to assist in establishing a new principal residence, or to prevent eviction or the discontinuance of utilities or heating in an existing residence. CSUMB is available to individuals who meet certain criteria including victims of family violence, persons who are homeless and persons being discharged from institutions including correctional facilities, hospitals, residential detox/crisis facilities and residential treatment programs for the treatment of substance abuse. The removal of this benefit will be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of OW and ODSP participants as no funds will be available for last month's rents, furniture, utility arrears, or any other expense deemed to be necessary for their health and welfare.

OW will continue to administer a discretionary benefit however, what that will look like needs to be determined as the Ministry changed the way this benefit was previously funded.

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The (CDSSAB) Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board is predicting a decline of about 63% in their ability to meet their client's needs. Last year, the expenditures for OW, ODSP and low income persons to service the entire District, totalled over \$1 million. With the rationalization measures being implemented, the CDSSAB will have a budget of \$379,787; just over a third of the amount normally required.

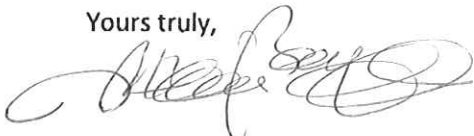
Many OW/ODSP recipients are unfortunate to struggle with a range of unmet health and social needs, including severe and persistent addiction and or mental health problems. As such, OW/ODSP recipients are amongst the most vulnerable people in our society. Without the basic necessities of life, many recipients will not be able to maintain their addiction & mental health treatment & recovery goals and will be at increased risk of relapse.

This will have a direct and indirect impact on the broader human services system, including the addiction and mental health system, the hospital system, primary care, the social services system and the criminal justice system. Any economic savings generated through the planned rationalization measures will simply increase cost elsewhere in the publicly funded human service system.

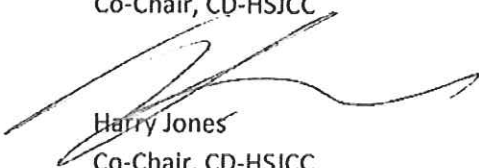
We strongly urge you to reconsider your plan and maintain the benefit.

On behalf of the Cochrane Human Services & Justice Coordinating Committee we remain

Yours truly,



Nathalie Bouffard
Co-Chair, CD-HSJCC



Harry Jones
Co-Chair, CD-HSJCC

Cc. David Landers, CEO-CDSSAB
Louise Paquette, CEO-N.E. LHIN
Minister Deb Mathews, Ministry of Health & Long Term Care
Minister John Gerretsen, Ministry of the Attorney General
Minister Eric Hoskins, Ministry of Child and Youth Services
Minister Kathleen Wynne, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Minister Madeleine Meilleur, Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services
Vicky Huen, Chair-Provincial HSJCC
Sandie Lieth & Trevor Tymchuk, Co-Chairs-N.E. Regional HSJCC
Gilles Bisson, MPP-Timmins James Bay
Charlie Angus, MP-Timmins James Bay