

Time for Change:
Allocation of MCSS Funding for 2002
for People with Developmental Disabilities

A Statement from Ten Ontario

Disability Organizations

November 29, 2001

The Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) is currently planning allocations of funding in the developmental services sector for 2002. This statement from several Ontario disability organizations urges the MCSS to allocate funds specifically to enable more individuals and families to have individualized support and funding in the coming year. These organizations strongly believe that it is time for change. It is time for the MCSS to be more strategic in its funding allocations, and to lend significant support to the move to individualize disability supports and funding. ***We urge the Minister to ensure that at least 25% of all new funding is allocated directly toward individualized funding arrangements.***

In many ways, this is a modest request for the Ministry to formally acknowledge and expand its strategic investment in individualized funding. The Ministry has already committed to an allocation of \$4.8 million new funding this year to SSAH. This represents 8.3% of the total allocation, all of which is being directed towards individualized funding. The Ministry has further committed \$6 million (10.3% of total allocation) of new funding to Foundations, a portion of which is being directed to individualized funding. The Special Services at Home and the Foundations programs

have many features of individualized support and funding. Many agencies in the province are also using their Ministry funds to provide individualized funding, including the Options project in Toronto, and the Community Living Associations in Brockville, Toronto, Windsor, Ajax, St. Marys and elsewhere. It is time to build on these initiatives in order that adults with developmental disabilities and their families can experience genuine choice and control in their lives.

Our organizations have been asking the Ministry of Community and Social Services for some time to formally recognize the individualized funding initiatives that are emerging throughout Ontario and elsewhere in the world and to strategically allocate a portion of disability support funding directly to such initiatives. We are deeply concerned that so much of the funding in the developmental services sector is being strategically targeted at congregated options such as group homes. Creative individualized alternatives such as SSAH, Foundations and the other programs mentioned above have demonstrated the efficiency and effectiveness of funding mechanisms that flow dollars directly to individuals and families. ***We urge the MCSS to promote and fund investments that enhance natural family homes and individualized support arrangements in community, thereby increasing the potential for inclusion and reducing the need and demand for costly institutional care or support through service programs.*** With the development of this alternative, more people with developmental disabilities will be supported throughout the province in a manner that is more likely to produce outcomes that include full, meaningful lives in the community.

The research is now very clear that individualized support and funding is the future paradigm and direction for supports for people with disabilities and is an emerging strategic approach being adopted in many jurisdictions around the world. Ontario was a pioneer and leader of these concepts with the early adoption and continuing support for the SSAH program. We have an opportunity to continue this leadership through further strategic investments in individualized supports and funding. Our organizations are available to assist the Ministry in establishing a framework for these investments. We have already prepared some significant tools to assist the Ministry in establishing such a

framework including the development of the Ontario Round Table Report on Individualized Funding that lays out a policy framework for individualized funding. ***We strongly urge the Ministry to use this document to guide planning and allocations.*** The Report was based on best practice and best policy from across Canada and around the world.

We are aware that the Ministry utilizes its regional planning groups to make some allocation decisions locally and we support the principle of localized planning. Clearly changes must be made, however, if we are to create effective mechanisms for allocating funds to individualized funding initiatives. Local planning groups are almost exclusively comprised of representatives of Developmental Services sector service agencies. This composition of local planning groups encourages continued preference being given to program-based services for individuals. ***We urge the Ministry to reform the local planning groups and create a mechanism for funding individualized support arrangements. This mechanism must include significant representation of individuals with disabilities and their families and we recommend that these individuals constitute at least 50% of any local planning body.*** We recommend that the Ministry review our work on this subject contained in Ontario Round Table Report on Individualized Funding.

Finally, ***it is time for the Ministry to properly fund local infrastructures for individualized support and funding.*** Research shows that independent planning and facilitation can significantly build capacity of individuals, families and communities. These community supports have been shown to be very cost-effective. Too often, admission to program-based services results in a decrease of natural community engagement and support of the individual involved and a corresponding increase in proportion of Ministry-funded supports and services needed by or delivered to the individual. ***We urge the Ministry to work with members of our organizations that have experience with capacity building and facilitation to implement this recommendation.***

Background document is attached.