



Family Alliance Ontario

August 7, 2018

Hon. Doug Ford, Premier

Premier's Office

Room 281

Legislative Building, Queen's Park

Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

doug.ford@pc.ola.org

Dear Premier Ford:

By way of introduction, Family Alliance Ontario (FAO) is an autonomous not for profit family network that has represented people with disabilities, their families, and their friends in Ontario, for the past 20 years. Additionally, FAO has supported the transformation of developmental services at the Ministry of Community and Social Services Partnership Table since its inception. Today, we are reaching out to you, on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families who participate in 21 affiliated family network groups in Ontario.

Family Alliance Ontario (FAO) wanted to approach you early in your tenure and offer some areas where we feel you could make a significant impact on behalf of all Ontario families living with disabilities and to make best lives for their dependent family members and ensure fiscal accountability. The decisions imposed by the past Liberal Government have burdened many ministries with undue costs, while burdening families physically, emotionally and financially as a result of ill-conceived mandates or unfortunate implementation of processes.

We are suggesting that you look at the following inefficiencies where funding can be reallocated, moving away from the heavily administrated bureaucracy, directing it to the people who desperately need it.

- 1) Bill 148: Families are not disputing the right of front line support workers to receive higher minimum wages. However, families are not small businesses and cannot bear the burdens of personal leave days and vacations, which jeopardizes the support their loved ones need. We are requesting that you enact the exemption process that was considered and offered for families to submit their special circumstances, recognizing the support circumstances are fully different from those of corporate employers and agencies. This would offset the need to find an additional 30% in funding to help families offset the onerous impacts of Bill 148.

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- 2) Increase the value and number of Direct and Individualized Funding Contracts. Families know the needs of their family members best and are able to use their funding efficiently for self-managed care thereby honouring individual choice and citizenship. We do appreciate that you have committed an initial \$5000.00/person to ease the burden for those eligible for support. However, this amount would enable families to purchase only 166 hours of respite care at modest rate of \$30/hour, resulting in 30 min/day over a one-year period. This is particularly problematic considering our 21 year old children who age out of school may require full-time care unlike their peers, many of which move on to a preferred destination for higher education or career direction.
- 3) Examine existing services within MCSS and eliminate bureaucratic inefficiencies and underutilized MCSS services. We are presenting three of many examples: a) The need for abundant housing navigators when there is a shortage and 22-year waiting list for suitable housing for our adult children, b) The need for the implementation of Quality Assurance Measure in our own homes where our adult family members live and c) The need for the redundant layers of administration and inconsistent processes across the 430 different agencies throughout Ontario that are used to administer DSO contracts, conduct assessments, and help families navigate non-available services.
- 4) Eliminate the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) as part of the Developmental Service Ontario Assessment. The SIS is intrusive, labour intensive, and focuses on functional deficits rather than promoting full inclusion and citizenship. Follow the lead of Alberta in eliminating the SIS and focus on a needs assessment that enables citizenship.

We are recommending that you begin by organizing a team including a strong family presence that would begin to weave together an accurate portrayal of the current system in order for you to be able to redirect MCSS invested dollars towards families with quick turnaround and impact without putting the existing programs at risk. We would like to work with you to begin this process as we are heavily connected with 21 family networks across the province.

We would be happy to meet with you at your earliest convenience to elaborate and help bring some positive change to families living with the most difficult of situations in Ontario by supporting its most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely,



Cindy Mitchell, President,
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