

First Choice News



SSAHPC SINCE 1990, REPRESENTING 29,000 FAMILIES

No End in Sight for Families on Wait Lists !

Special Edition Volume 4 Issue 2
June 2009

There are many Ontario families waiting to receive SSAH funding with no end in sight for them . We are very concerned about what we perceive as a new direction on SSAH taken by the government . This new direction took effect April 1, 2009 and includes:

- There will be no new approvals .
- New applicants will be placed on a wait list.
- The 2009-10 approvals of existing contracts will be based on the amount spent last year.
- Any approved additional funds will go on a wait list.
- Where a family received both SSAH and ACSD funding and no longer qualifies for ACSD, the SSAH renewal amount will not increase to offset the loss .
- Any approval that is not actively used within 6 months of the date of the approval will be cancelled.
- Applications for renewal that are received 3 months past the renewal date will not be approved.
- An appeal to the regional director will not result in increased funding.



We understand from our recent meeting with Alex Bezzina, ADM for MCSS Operations Division that there is a \$ 7M deficit in SSAH. The government is trying to clear the deficit by tightening up the program and not taking any new applications. We are very concerned about this turn of events because SSAH is a program of First Choice for families and we believe that their access to it is at risk ! We do know that over the past few years the only new funding from MCSS for Developmental Services has gone to increased wages for agency workers.

Since SSAH is used by 29,000 Ontario families and there are now at least 3000 families on the

provincial wait list, we know that these families are counting on it as an essential support. We don't understand why the government will provide the wage enhancements to workers while not providing families with the support they need.

We believe that this is not fair and we also believe this is very shortsighted considering that families are the backbone of support to people with disabilities.

On June 3, 2009 Minister Meilleur stated "We will continue to invest in SSAH ". We are very happy to hear this statement. Please let the Minister know how important this investment will be.

We **ENCOURAGE YOU** to write Minister M. Meilleur and to write, call and meet with your local MPP to inform them of how important SSAH is. We do not want to see SSAH become a closed program.

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For MPPs email addresses:
http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/go2.jsp?Page=/members/members_main&menuItem=mpps_header&locale=en

SSAHPC,
Special Services at Home
Provincial Coalition

SSAHPC has Eight (8) Messages for the Ministry of Community and Social Services

- ☑ **No new SSAH funds since 2006.**
- ☑ For the last 3 yrs **all new funding** from MCSS has been allocated to wage increases for workers employed by agencies.
- ☑ There has **never** been an enhancement to wages paid through SSAH contracts.
- ☑ There are **many families** with NO funding, **waiting** for SSAH.
- ☑ Families are the backbone of support for people with disabilities in Ontario.
- ☑ The new direction for 'SSAH savings' target families who provide the most support with the least resources.
- ☑ **Considering the MCSS Transformation principles that is certainly NOT Fair, nor equitable !**
- ☑ **Invest in families; Increase SSAH funding; Don't Claw it back !**



In January 2008 SSAHPC published a position paper,

“KEEP IT SIMPLE, KEEP IT FLEXIBLE AND RESPECTFUL, KEEP IT PROVINCIAL, 27,000 FAMILIES DESERVE THE BEST !”

Our five (5) recommendations for actions to safeguard and expand the usefulness of SSAH.

1. **Keep It Simple – Help Families, Don't Hinder Them.** SSAH should continue as a unique program rather than blend it into broader approaches that add layers of complexity and discontinuity.
2. **Ensure Seamless Transitions – Prevent Distress, Don't Cause It.** SSAH should remain a program that allocates provincial dollars to ensure portability.
3. **Protect SSAH As A Choice for Adults.** SSAH should continue to ease the transition from childhood to adulthood for people with intellectual disabilities, and be expanded to be a choice for adults with physical disabilities.
4. **Ensure Appeal Mechanisms Go Above the Decision Makers.** SSAH should retain appeal mechanisms that go beyond the local level of decision makers.
5. **Increase Funding for a Strategy that Works.**

MCSS Stats

Statistics received to date for the SSAH program

Southwest Region

598 new on wait list
659 approved for more funds on wait list
1,257 total on wait list

Central West Region

Approx 600-700 wait listed

Toronto Region

Approx 500 on wait list

An Very Interesting Question was asked in Parliament about SSAH

HANSARD

Date:

Wednesday, June 3, 2009

[The record of what was said in parliament that day]

SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Reverend Matt Gallinger is here from the Premier's hometown of Ottawa. He is seeking support for his 10-month-old daughter Daria, who has severe complex disabilities which warrant resources from the special services at home program. The family urgently requires access to this fund so that Daria can receive the nursing care she needs at home in a loving environment. Why is Reverend Gallinger finding it impossible to obtain funding through the government's special services at home program?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me welcome the parents in the House today. We thank you for all the advocating you do on behalf of those parents who need special services at home for their children. I'm very pleased to say in this House today that this government, since we came into

power, has increased the money in this program by 45%. This year alone we will be spending almost \$100 million for this very good program, a program that parents need to be able to continue to keep their son or daughter at home and to care for them. This program provides money to the parents to get service for their disabled child.



The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: A shameful political decision was made by the McGuinty Liberals to stop funding additional families and children with disabilities in this province. That's the reality. Daria was born with cerebral palsy. She must be fed through a tube and has a host of exacting care requirements that qualify her family to receive support through this very program. The child advocate, the Ombudsman and New Democrats, as well as the community at large have all been pushing to have the McGuinty government meet its obligation to fund the needs of children like Daria.

Will the McGuinty government agree today to lift the cap they've imposed on care allowances for children with complex disabilities? Will you ensure that Daria and her family receive the support they need from the special services at home program?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: My ministry provided special services at home to more than 27,000 families this year. We know that we need to do more. We will continue to work with the parents and to work with our partners in the community.

Last Friday I was very pleased to be with the Premier to open the Rotary Home in Ottawa. The Rotary Home is a respite home to give a break to parents when they need to go away. Of course, they cannot leave these children to anyone, so we have this respite service in Ottawa and across the province.

We will continue to invest in special services at home. I'm very pleased to say that we are helping 27,000.

First Choice News

– Ministry Regional Offices <http://www.accesson.ca/mcss/english/ministry/>

Regional Offices of MCSS			
	Northern	North East	Eastern
Area Served	Algoma, Kenora, Manitoulin & Sudbury, Rainy River, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Thunder Bay	Cochrane, Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Timiskaming, eastern part of Kenora District along Hudson and James Bay coastline	Cornwall, Ottawa Carleton, Prescott & Russell, Renfrew
Address	MCSS Northern Region 199 Larch Street, 10th Floor, Suite 1002 Sudbury, Ontario P3E 5P9	MCSS North East Region 621 Main Street W North Bay, Ontario P1B 2V6	MCSS Eastern Region 347 Preston Street 3rd floor Ottawa, Ontario K1S 3H8
Phone	(705) 564-4515	(705) 474-3540	(613) 234-1188
Fax	(705) 564-2163	(705) 474-5815	(613) 783-5958
Toll Free	1-800-461-1167	1-800-461-6977	1-800-267-5111
TTY	(705)564-3233	(705) 474-7665	(613) 787-3959

Regional Offices of MCSS			
Name	Central East Office	South East	South West
Area Served	Durham, Haliburton, Northumberland, Peterborough, Simcoe, Kawartha Lakes , York	Hastings, Kingston, Lanark, Leeds & Grenville, Lennox & Addington, Prince Edward County	Counties of Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, Huron, Bruce, Perth, Grey, Essex, Chatham-Kent, Lambton
Address	MCSS Central East Region 465 Davis Drive Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 8T2	MCSS South East Region 11 Beachgrove Lane Kingston, Ontario K7M 9A6	MCSS South West Region 217 York Street, Suite 203 P.O. Box 5217 London, Ontario N6A 5R1
Phone	(905) 868-8900	(613) 545-0539	(519) 438-5111
Fax	(905) 895-4330	(613) 536-7272	(519) 672-9510
Toll free #	1-877-669-6658	1-800-646-3209	1-800 -265-4197
TTY:	(905) 715-7759	(613) 536-7304	(519) 663-5276

MCSS Regional Offices—<http://www.accesson.ca/mcss/english/ministry/regionalOffices/>

Regional Offices of MCSS			
Name of Office	Toronto	Central West	Hamilton Niagara
Area Served	Toronto	Dufferin, Halton, Peel, Waterloo, Wellington	Brantford, Haldimand/ Norfolk, Hamilton Wentworth, Niagara
Address	MCSS Toronto Region 477 Mount Pleasant Road, 3rd floor Toronto, Ontario M7A 1G1	MCSS Central West Region 6733 Mississauga Road, Suite 200 Mississauga, Ontario L5N 6J5	MCSS Hamilton Niagara Region 119 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y7
Phone	(416) 325-0500	(905) 567-7177	(905) 521-7280
Fax	(416) 325-0565	(905) 567-3215	(905) 546-8277
Toll free #		1-877-832-2818	1-800-561-0568 St.Catharines 1-800-263-5413
TTY		TTY: (905) 567-3219	1-866-221-2229 (905) 546-8276

Time is Running Out

BY JANIS JAFFE WHITE

The tens of thousands of citizens with developmental disabilities and their families in this province have no hope left. Why should they? They have been let down again and again.

When the Special Services At Home Program of the Ministry of Community and Social Services was first introduced in 1982, it provided Ontario families with some funding to assist their loved ones to live within their own communities with dignity and worth intact. It is widely known that for almost thirty years this individualized approach has been extremely popular and highly effective at producing positive outcomes. This benefits everyone.

Why is it that people are languishing on SSAH wait lists? In Toronto alone, there are more than 500 applicants on the SSAH wait list and this number grows weekly. Investing in the SSAH program is investing in the well-being and inclusion of those who are the most vulnerable in our society.

This government prides itself on closing the last institutions yet fails to take responsibility for the re-institutionalization that happens when fundamental programs like SSAH are no longer its priority. Families and groups around the province are starting to wonder how much longer the SSAH program will be around or lost by being rolled quietly into another program.

Time has run out. Lives are being shattered. Families are being torn apart. Communities are being destroyed. **This is no exaggeration. Does anyone out there care?**

First Choice News

Member Groups of SSAHPC

Agency & Assoc. Groups

Autism Society Ontario
 Coalition for Inclusive Education
 Community Living Ontario
 Down Syndrome Association of Ontario
 The Easter Seal Society, Ontario
 Extend-a-Family
 Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario
 Kerry's Place Autism Services
 Muscular Dystrophy Assoc. ON
 Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services
 Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy
 Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of ON

Family Groups

Family Alliance ON
 Durham Family Network
 Family Voice of Lanark County
 Hamilton Family Network
 Leeds & Grenville Family Network
 London Family Network
 Samia-Lambton Family Network
 Toronto Family Network
 Thunder Bay Family Network
 Windsor Essex Family Network
 Families for a Secure Future

We meet 2- 3 times a year. We welcome contributions from member groups, families & friends. We want to hear about your experience with SSAH.

Alison Ouellette,
 Co Chair
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Keep watching our web site for new stats!
www.ssahcoalition.ca

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 c/o BDACI

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SSAHPC SINCE 1990, REPRESENTING 29,000 FAMILIES

Keep What Works for 29,000 Families; They deserve the Best !



Special Services at Home (SSAH)

A FAMILY'S STORY,
 BY **FRANK COLOZZA,**
LONDON, ON



I am a parent of a 12 yr old boy with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS). Our family lives in London, Ontario. I have been sending e-mails and letters to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, including Minister Meilleur concerning the lack of adequate funding for the SSAH.

We have been on a waiting list for 2 years! It is absolutely appalling how the ministry has allowed



SSAHPC has requested the most recent provincial statistics regarding SSAH.

As soon as they are received they will be posted on our web site.

www.ssahcoalition.ca



the SSAH program to be underfunded.

I keep telling the Ministry that presently the SSAH program is underfunded. It is very important that our provincial government offer a program that is funded properly to benefit all those families that qualify. NO WAIT LISTS.

How can our provincial government in good conscience provide money to help only some children and individuals with disabilities ?

The whole SSAH program is funded poorly !



Thanks to our Contributors

- Family Alliance ON
- Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Assoc. of ON
- Brockville & District Assoc. for Community Involvement
- Community Living Ontario
- Kerry's Place
- Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy

The program has expanded over the years

1994	9,000 families	= \$ 28 M
2002	19,000 families	= \$ 61 M
2009	29,000 families	= \$ 99 M

Economical, Useful and still the First Choice !