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Archived - 2014 Mandate letter: Community and Social Services

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities for the year 2014



September 25, 2014

The Honourable Helena Jaczek
Minister of Community and Social Services
Ministry of Community and Social Services
80 Grosvenor Street
Sixth Floor, Hepburn Block
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Jaczek:

I am honoured to welcome you to your role as Minister of Community and Social Services. We have a strong Cabinet in place, and I am confident that together we will build Ontario up, create new opportunities and champion a secure future for people across our province. The people of Ontario have entrusted their government to be a force for good, and we will reward that trust by working every day in the best interests of every person in this province.

As we implement a balanced and comprehensive plan for Ontario, we will lead from the activist centre. We will place emphasis on partnerships with businesses, communities and people to help foster continued economic growth and make a positive impact on the lives of every Ontarian. This collaborative approach will shape all the

work we do. It will ensure we engage people on the issues that matter the most to them, and that we implement meaningful solutions to our shared challenges.

Our government's most recent Speech from the Throne outlined a number of key priorities that will guide your work as minister. Growing the economy and helping to create good jobs are fundamental to building more opportunity and security, now and in the future. That critical priority is supported by strategic investments in the talent and skills of our people, from childhood to retirement. It is supported through the building of modern infrastructure, transit and a seamless transportation network. It is supported by a dynamic business climate that thrives on innovation, creativity and partnerships to foster greater prosperity. And it is reflected across all of our government, in every area, and will extensively inform our programs and policies.

As we move forward with our plan to grow the economy and create jobs, we will do so through the lens of fiscal prudence. Our 2014 Budget reinforces our commitment to balancing the budget by 2017-18; it is essential that every area adheres to the program-spending objectives established in it. We will choose to invest wisely in initiatives that strengthen Ontario's competitive advantage, create jobs and provide vital public services to our families. The President of the Treasury Board, collaborating with the Minister of Finance, will work closely with you and your fellow Cabinet members to ensure that our government meets its fiscal targets. The President of the Treasury Board will also lead the government's efforts on accountability, openness and modernization as we implement new accountability measures across government.

As Minister of Community and Social Services, you will provide support to vulnerable Ontarians. You will concentrate on those in financial need — and on people with disabilities and other special needs — so they can participate in our economy and communities. You will also continually engage users of the system and the broader social services sector to identify areas of improvement. Changes will be supported by evidence-based policy and appropriate metrics to measure our progress to ensure transparency and accountability to the people of Ontario.

Your ministry's specific priorities include:

Transforming Social Assistance and Developmental Services

- Driving long-term transformation of the social assistance system. I ask that the changes you implement promote greater independence by improving incomes, encouraging work and enhancing access to core supports outside the social assistance system. You will work with stakeholders, municipalities and other ministries to revise key benefits to improve the accountability and integrity of the social assistance system.
- Continuing to transform the delivery of developmental services in Ontario to help adults with developmental disabilities and their families live as independently as possible. This transformation will provide choice and flexibility through direct funding — and within the existing transfer payment agencies and residential services system.
- Seeking support from the federal government where their action is required to help transform the social assistance system, including working together to provide services to vulnerable Ontarians.

Collaborating on Shared Responsibilities across Government

- Collaborating with other ministries so that, wherever possible, people using government programs and services can interact seamlessly when a service that your ministry delivers is handed off to another government sector.
- Collaborating with other ministers to align services to provide better support for youth transitions and managing complex needs.
- Improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities. You will do so in partnership with the enhancements that the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is making to the employment and training system — and with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure's engagement with employers.

- Working with developmental service agencies to modernize service delivery and continuing to promote the provision of supports that are high-quality, cost-effective and person-centred.
- Supporting the work of the Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy in implementing Realizing Our Potential, Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Supporting the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in the review of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy and in work toward our government's goal of ending homelessness.
- Collaborating with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and others, as required, to deliver the second phase of Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. Your goal is to deliver co-ordinated, timely and quality services that support healthy, resilient and inclusive communities.
- Continuing work with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Minister of Children and Youth Services and others, as required, to co-ordinate services and supports for children with special needs and their families.
- Working with the ministers of Health and Long-Term Care, of Municipal Affairs and Housing, of Education and others, as required, to develop a policy on community hubs. This policy will support using public assets efficiently — and building stronger ties among community organizations, schools and municipalities.

We have an ambitious agenda for the next four years. I know that, by working together in partnership, we can be successful. The above list of priority initiatives is not meant to be exhaustive, as there are many other responsibilities that you and your ministry will need to carry out. To that end, this mandate letter is to be used by your ministry to develop more detailed plans for implementation of the initiatives above, in addition to other initiatives not highlighted in this letter.

I ask that you continue to build on the strong relationships we have with the Ontario Public Service, the broader public sector, other levels of government, and the private, non-profit and voluntary sectors. We want to be the most open and transparent government in the country. We want to be a government that works for the people of this province — and with them. It is of the utmost importance that we lead responsibly, act with integrity, manage spending wisely and are accountable for every action we take.

I look forward to working together with you in building opportunity today, and securing the future for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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