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ISSN 1180-4386

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Third Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 4 February 2003**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mardi 4 février 2003**

**Standing committee on  
finance and economic affairs**

Pre-budget consultations

**Comité permanent des finances  
et des affaires économiques**

Consultations prébudgétaires

Chair: Joseph Spina  
Clerk: Katch Koch

Président : Joseph Spina  
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Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Tuesday 4 February 2003

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES  
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES

Mardi 4 février 2003

*The committee met at 0901 in the Empress Room, Ambassador Hotel, Sudbury, Ontario.*

## PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

**The Chair (Mr Joseph Spina):** Good morning, everyone. This is the meeting of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. We're in Sudbury, early in the morning.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE  
EMPLOYEES UNION, LOCAL 666

**The Chair:** We'll begin with our first delegation, OPSEU Local 666. Please come forward and state your names clearly for the purpose of Hansard. You'll have 20 minutes. Any time left over from your presentation we'll use for questions in rotation from the parties. Welcome, gentlemen.

**Mr Dave Wiley:** My name is Dave Wiley. I'm a social worker at the Northeast Mental Health Centre, with over 30 years' experience. I'm here before you today as president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, Local 666. The Northeast Mental Health Centre is the host agency for the Pinegate addiction programs here in Sudbury.

On my right is Rick Grylls, president of Mine Mill Local 598, CAW. Rick is representing the women's recovery continuum in northern Ontario, Lakeside Centre and Robins Hill after-care services, primarily in the women's area. Unfortunately Mr Dave Mellor, the area coordinator for the United Steelworkers of America, is not with us this morning. That particular union represents the Salvation Army treatment and rehabilitation services for men.

I'd like to start this morning by telling you about a phone call I received last week following a short letter to the editor in Northern Life. A gentleman phoned me and said, "What in the heck is going on with addiction services in Sudbury?" So I explained to him what is going on: the same things as I'm sure many of you will hear today and have heard previously. He told me a story, and I want to leave that story with you.

At about 10 years of age, he started into drugs and alcohol. He spent a good 15 years in and out of the criminal justice system. He went to the Salvation Army here in Sudbury twice, for serious addiction problems.

He beat that habit, went back to school and is now a businessman in this community. He said, "You know, there are 15 others just like me. We had a horrendous early life." He's now 35 years of age and a contributing member to this community. He has been off drugs for six to seven years now. When we go back in time, things were working six, seven years ago. Things aren't working today.

I'm not going to go through everything in the handout. I know you fellows will be able to do a lot of reading and look at all of it. But just to get a sense of, or an orientation to, the Manitoulin-Sudbury addiction services, we have Pinegate Addiction Service, where we have withdrawal management programs for men and women. Those had been separate programs. The women's is the Northern Regional Recovery Continuum, which has a variety of services for women, and then the Salvation Army, which is men's residential and after-care services. In addition, there are other after-care services: Rockhaven, the Sudbury Action Centre for Youth and the Manitoulin Community Withdrawal Management Service on Manitoulin Island.

This service, for many years, has worked in a very supportive and integrated way to make services work in our community. However, with the lack of funding, or the underfunding—no funding increases to base budgets in 10 of the last 11 years—these services have done all the cuts they can do. Within the Pinegate withdrawal management program, they're probably down about eight staff members from what they were 10 years ago. If I add it up in terms of assessment referral services, I would say they probably have five or six people working in that service now. Three of those eight, by the way, are management positions, and those were some of the first to go. But the cost savings in reducing staff have gone to meet balanced budgets over the last number of years.

We're here for a couple of reasons. I'm hoping there's a really general sense of the crisis that addiction services are in, not just in Sudbury but throughout Ontario. Locally, we have the women's services. The last client went into women's residential treatment on December 22, and the next admission wasn't until January 18. On January 6, withdrawal management services for men and women, in order to balance the budget, were co-located using a coeducational model. They cut the beds from

28—that's 28 combined, men and women—in a co-located, coeducational model, down to 13. That started on January 6.

Our local services are scrambling right now to find residential treatment for members of our community and throughout northern Ontario. Sudbury does tend to be a referral source for a very wide geographic area, not only in the medical community but also in addiction services, and one of the real values that people have is the idea of a women-only withdrawal management program here in Sudbury. So we have a system here of three different agencies primarily within the Sudbury community, with other supportive agencies, that have worked co-operatively for a number of years. I think they're now at the point where what happens in one agency—when you cut back withdrawal beds at Pinegate, it's going to affect the treatment services in other agencies, and that's the difficulty we have today.

It's my understanding that at some point in time the committee heard from the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs, probably in some of the Toronto hearings. I went through their report, and I made a few copies. It may be a duplicate of what you've already received, but that's fine. I just want to highlight so that people clearly understand the economics of addiction services throughout this province.

Single and others in 1996 estimated the cost of substance abuse to the Ontario economy at over \$7 billion in 1992—a pretty conservative estimate. Data from the same study allowed for estimation of hospitalizations due to substance abuse in Ontario at 114,000, and annual number of hospital days due to substance abuse at 1.608 million. If you look at issues where depression and drug dependency—drug and alcohol difficulties—come together, there were 678,000 employed Canadians who lost 39,000 person-years of work due to depression, and there's a high concurrent disorder kind of thing with depression. It's not just depression on its own; depression goes along with some alcohol and other drug problems. Mortality rates are very high. I think a government document back in 1992, if I'm not mistaken, said that one in three deaths in Ontario was in some way attributable to alcohol and/or drug/substance misuse.

#### 0910

Wilkerson, in 2002, notes that Canada has the youngest average age of onset for addiction disorders in countries surveyed by the World Health Organization. And it's a growing problem not only in Canada and Ontario; it has been recognized in the United States of America. You may note that in his address last week, President Bush dedicated \$600 million in additional funds for serious drug problems.

There has been no increase in base funding for 10 of the last 11 years, and what I'm hearing from the ministry is, "Don't expect any more money on April 1." I guess that has been predetermined by someone, somewhere; I'm not sure whom. But that is just disastrous for our community and, I think, all communities throughout Ontario.

My rough guesstimate or estimate of inflationary pressures for commodities and services is pushing toward the 30% mark. Administrative efficiencies have been handled in previous years, and unfortunately, at this point in time there are no more efficiencies to be had. What it means now is longer wait lists and cuts to services, and all the important variables in providing a good service—like to that gentleman six or seven years ago—are no longer available. At one time, withdrawal management workers would take somebody in, in our community, and within a day to two days they'd be able to do a referral and assessment. Now it's taking a month. Once that happens, it takes maybe two months, possibly three, and in some communities in Ontario, I understand, up to eight or nine months, to be able to enter residential treatment.

I want to spend just a moment—and some of the things I'm going to refer to are highlighted in *Setting the Course*, the ministry's document on addiction services in Ontario. There's an acknowledgement that addiction services are more complex today than ever before, as these agencies struggle with addictions and serious mental illness—schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder. There's an acknowledgement that addictions contribute to family problems, violence, absenteeism on the job, safety issues, injuries, accidents, legal problems, homelessness, physical and mental health problems and financial problems. Alcohol and drug addictions affect all communities in many and varied ways.

In our Pinegate situation, in order to balance the books they have had to take the extraordinary measure, as I said earlier, of reducing the number of withdrawal management beds, co-locating and providing a coeducational model. I'll say clearly that the coeducational model is one that violates best practice standards by Health Canada. Health Canada defines best practice as "a consensus of key expert opinion on the approaches and elements of treatment which appear to result in the most successful treatment outcomes for women." I left some copies of that document for people to review.

Just to highlight some of those areas, substance abuse research has revealed that the impact of substances on women and their treatment differ from those of men. There are program barriers, including treatment that has been structured to meet the needs of men. The "male as norm" bias is manifested by lack of women-specific program elements.

The document notes the lack of appropriate treatment services for women, including women-centred and gender-specific services. We had that here in Sudbury, and it has been appreciated by communities all over Ontario; not just in northern Ontario but in southern Ontario. Women's addiction services, including withdrawal management, need to provide flexible services, including immediate responsiveness to women when they've identified a need or a willingness to participate.

Accessibility to treatment for women in northern, rural and remote areas is lacking. Women must leave their communities and assume the costs of housing, trans-

portation and child care, and early engagement and treatment is critical.

The document also talks about the fact that coeducational treatment may create unhealthy relationship dynamics and suggests not throwing women into a mixed setting. Have an all-women setting to talk about how they're going to manage in a mixed setting.

Studies also suggest there's a strong relationship between incest experiences and substance misuse. The studies show that two thirds of women with alcohol use problems had experienced some form of childhood sexual abuse, compared to one fifth or one third in two other samples without alcohol use problems. When holding treatment conditions constant, childhood victimization has a specific connection to the development of women's alcohol-related disorders.

Recently, the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs called for \$120 million in provincial funding commitment to community mental health and addictions. I tend to think that's low. I think they were being very conservative in their estimates; I'm not sure how they got their estimates. But I do know there needs to be approaching \$1 million put into the Sudbury services to get them back on track as to where they were 10 years ago, providing a good, well coordinated, integrated service among three different agencies and having good outcomes.

This problem isn't new, and unfortunately, one of the reasons we're here today is we're hearing that it's not going away. On April 1, we're going to be faced with more cuts to service, longer wait lists and layoffs within the workplace, creating chaos within the continuum of addiction services in our community.

I'll refer to a letter—it's part of the package—by our local district health council on May 16 to the regional director of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. In spite of some minimal funding increase in the budget last year, the DHC staff, in reviewing operational plans, felt, "It is imperative to highlight that this additional funding will not be sufficient to address the severe financial pressures that are outlined in the operating plans. The addictions sector has clearly articulated that they can no longer continue to provide the same level of services given the erosion of their budgets over the past decade." They reveal that after they have "implemented several cost reduction measures over the years, agencies are now reducing, or planning to reduce, their front-line staff [and] their ability to provide direct services."

On June 5, my letter to the Honourable Tony Clement highlighted some things in terms of Pinegate, which has provided a wonderful service within this community. It also speaks somewhat to the issue of withdrawal management services and co-location versus the coeducational programming that's being proposed. I have very serious concerns about an administration—and I'll say it: the Northeast Mental Health Centre—along with the regional office of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, that has approved a coeducational model to balance the books. I have very serious concerns about their ability to

provide leadership at this point in time, and violate best practice standards put out by Health Canada.

I have a letter, included in your package, from Shelley Martel, who has also reviewed and talked to all of the service agencies and has a very good feel for exactly what those problems are, and I think she has addressed those in her letter.

#### 0920

The problem is well understood. It's clear that we can't go on any further. We addressed council a few weeks ago. I said to council, "I wish I could come before our local council on this particular problem," because it's not only this community, as I say; it's throughout Ontario.

I wish I could say things like cuts to addiction services and longer wait lists for treatment are not going to affect our policing services. But if people don't get service, they're going to be on the streets, they're going to be in the jails, they're going to be knocking on the emergency department doors. I wish I could say there won't be any effect on our police services, but I can't say that. I wish I could say that there won't be any residual effects within the child protection service agencies, the children's aid societies here locally, due to families where a member is experiencing drug and/or alcohol problems, but I can't say that either. I wish I could say it won't affect our classrooms and our schools within this community, but I can't say that. There's a very high percentage of people who are associated with addiction problems. They touch everybody. I think there was a quote in one of the documents that 50% of people would know of someone, whether it be an employer, a supervisor, a neighbour, a relative, who has to deal with someone with an addictions issue.

Today we're basically saying we need some solutions to this problem, and time is really running out in more ways than one.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Wiley and Mr Grylls. That concludes your time. We appreciate your input. Thank you for coming and bringing this to our attention.

#### CENTRE DE SANTÉ COMMUNAUTAIRE DE SUDBURY

**The Chair:** Our next presenter is le Centre de santé communautaire de Sudbury. Please come forward and state your name for the record. If anyone in the audience would like to have translation services, the young ladies on the side will assist in getting you a speaker-monitor. Please proceed. Bienvenue.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas :** Bonjour. Je m'appelle France Gélinas. Je suis la directrice du Centre de santé communautaire de Sudbury. Good morning, everyone. J'aimerais remercier M. Spina et les membres du comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques de m'avoir donné la parole ce matin.

Les raisons qui m'ont motivée à venir vous parler ce matin sont nombreuses et diverses. Mais, puisque le

temps est limitée, je serai brève pour donner la place aux questions.

Je dirige le seul et unique centre de santé communautaire à Sudbury. Il y a 56 centres de santé communautaire en Ontario, dont seulement quatre sont situés dans le nord de l'Ontario, soit celui de Sudbury, un à New Liskeard, un à Thunder Bay et un à Ignace.

Comme tous les centres de santé communautaire de la province, nous sommes dirigés par un conseil d'administration. Nous offrons des services de soins primaires grâce à une équipe multidisciplinaire composée de médecins de famille, infirmières, infirmières praticiennes, d'une nutritionniste et d'une travailleuse sociale. Ces professionnels de la santé travaillent en équipe pour offrir les meilleurs soins primaires à notre clientèle. Tous sont à salaire. Nous ne facturons pas la RAMO, mieux connue sous « OHIP ». Nous sommes financés à 100 % par le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée pour les services de soins primaires.

Par contre, les centres de santé communautaire visent également la promotion de la santé, la prévention de la maladie et le développement communautaire. Nos activités, tels les cours prénataux, les cours Choisir de maigrir, Cesser de fumer, à la petite enfance etc sont basées sur ce qu'on appelle les déterminants de la santé. Les recherches sur les déterminants de la santé ont prouvé sans l'ombre d'un doute que le système de santé ne suffit pas à maintenir ou améliorer le niveau de santé des gens ou des communautés. Pour ce faire, il faut travailler au niveau des choses comme l'isolement, l'éducation, le travail et les habitudes de vie. Ceux-ci, on les appelle les déterminants de la santé. Un centre de santé communautaire est équipé pour faire ce genre de travail. En plus des médecins et infirmières qui travaillent pour nous, nous avons également des promoteurs de la santé, des agents de développement communautaire etc.

Par exemple, le centre que je dirige, le centre de Sudbury, offre des services sur six sites. On retrouve le site principal à Sudbury, un site à Hanmer et un autre site satellite à Chelmsford. Nous offrons une clinique pour les sans-abri en partenariat avec d'autres agences de la santé. La clinique pour les sans-abri à Sudbury a présentement entre 400 et 500 sans-abri, peu importe le mois du recensement. Personne ne voulait prendre le « lead » pour s'occuper de cette population. C'est le centre de santé communautaire qui l'a fait, sinon il y aurait toujours rien pour cette population-là. Nous le faisons avec des levées de fonds, des prélèvements de fonds, et en empruntant des services à d'autres programmes : un jour d'un médecin de Chelmsford, une demi-journée de l'infirmière praticienne de Sudbury etc. Nous parrainons également un centre de soins infirmiers à Sudbury-Est. Sudbury-Est est à environ 100 kilomètres d'ici, pour ceux qui ne le connaissent pas. Et nous avons un site à Noëlville et un autre à St-Charles.

Les gens, les clients, s'inscrivent avec nous pour recevoir les services de soins primaires. Comme tout le monde a un médecin de famille, eux ont leur médecin de famille avec le centre de santé. Nous avons présentement

six médecins qui travaillent avec nous. Plusieurs entre eux sont des femmes qui travaillent à temps partiel pendant qu'elles élèvent leur famille. Nous avons en ce moment 8 000 clients de soins primaires. Nous opérons dans des régions insuffisamment desservies où plusieurs milliers de personnes n'ont pas de médecin de famille. Notre centre de santé, comme tous les autres centres de la province, n'accepte pas de nouveaux clients, et pour nous, depuis trois ans. Nous avons des listes d'attente pour chacun de nos services.

En plus, les travailleurs des centres de santé communautaire n'ont pas reçu d'augmentation de salaire depuis 1992, soit depuis plus de 10 ans. Les salaires sont très bas. Ils ne sont pas compétitifs aux autres services de santé.

Malgré tout, j'ai présentement une demande d'un médecin qui veut venir travailler au centre de santé communautaire. À Sudbury, plus de 25 000 personnes n'ont pas de médecin de famille. Moi, j'ai une demande d'un médecin qui veut que je l'embauche, qui veut venir travailler chez nous, mais je ne peux pas l'embaucher puisque les postes sont comblés et les budgets des centres de santé communautaire sont gelés depuis 10 ans.

#### 0930

J'aimerais que vous compreniez la déception des gens, de ces 25 000 personnes-là sans médecin de famille. Plusieurs d'entre eux sont âgées, sont malades, et viennent de recevoir un diagnostic de maladie sérieuse : un cancer, le rhumatisme etc. Ces personnes-là sont désespérées de se trouver un médecin. Finalement, bonne nouvelle : un médecin veut venir à Sudbury, veut venir s'installer chez nous, ne veut pas pratiquer selon la formule OHIP, veut venir dans un centre de santé communautaire. Et on ne peut pas l'embaucher.

Si le médecin voulait ouvrir sa propre pratique, il n'y aurait aucun problème. Des incitatifs financiers pourraient facturer OHIP jusqu'à 250 000 \$ par année. Il pourrait ouvrir une pratique solo sans problème. Mais ce n'est pas tous les médecins qui veulent pratiquer comme ça. Plusieurs aiment les avantages qu'offre la pratique en centre de santé communautaire. Bien, ce médecin-là est allé s'installer ailleurs—elle s'est installée ailleurs. C'était une femme. Pour les gens qui avaient finalement un espoir de médecin de famille, ceci est intenable et quasi cruel.

Le modèle des centres de santé communautaire est excellent. Les gens l'adorent. Nous sommes dirigés par un conseil d'administration qui nous tient au courant des besoins de notre population afin d'être à l'affût des changements. Les professionnels de la santé travaillent en équipe et chacun se spécialise dans son champs d'expertise. Chez nous, les infirmières praticiennes travaillent dans leur plein champs de pratique. Les médecins font de la médecine; pas de l'administration, pas des horaires de secrétaires. Ce sont les gestionnaires qui font ceci.

Malgré les bas salaires, la grande demande pour nos services et les horaires fous, on a très peu de roulement du personnel. Ce modèle plaît aux professionnels de la santé pour différentes raisons, comme les possibilités de

développement professionnel, les congés, les horaires stables et raisonnables, la possibilité de travailler à temps partiel etc.

Donc, non seulement les centres de santé communautaire n'ont pas eu d'augmentation budgétaire ou salariale depuis 10 ans, mais depuis près de six à sept ans maintenant, il y a très peu de nouveaux centres en Ontario, bien que près de 100 communautés, plusieurs en milieu rural et du nord, ont fait des demandes pour avoir un centre de santé communautaire.

Par exemple, dans notre région nous avons les demandes suivantes :

Le centre de Sudbury demande d'avoir un site complet à Hanmer et à Chelmsford.

Copper Cliff, dans la ville du grand Sudbury, veut un centre de santé.

Elliot Lake a fait demande pour un centre de santé.

Les municipalités de Sudbury-Est—la Rivière-des-Français, Markstay, Warren—ont fait demande pour un centre de santé.

Aucune de ces demandes n'a été financée. Le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée avait mis un moratoire sur le développement de nouveaux centres jusqu'à ce qu'une revue stratégique du programme soit faite. Les résultats de cette étude ont été rendus publics en juin dernier. L'étude fait l'éloge des modèles des centres de santé et prouve leur efficacité et leur qualité. Entre autres choses, le rapport démontre les avantages d'avoir une rémunération à salaire plutôt qu'à l'acte pour tous les employés, incluant les médecins; que les centres de santé prescrivent moins d'ordonnances; que les clients des centres de santé se présentent moins souvent à l'urgence des hôpitaux; et que les centres relèvent eux-mêmes les défis à la santé de leur collectivité.

Il est maintenant temps d'augmenter les budgets des centres de santé communautaire pour nous permettre de prendre de nouveaux clients et de mettre en place de nouveaux centres.

En dernier lieu, étant donné que je travaille à Sudbury, tous les yeux sont tournés vers l'Hôpital régional de Sudbury. Le projet de consolidation des services hospitaliers sur un seul site est très important. J'étais présidente du Conseil régional de la santé lorsque nous avons fait cette recommandation à la ministre de la Santé du temps. J'y croyais dans le temps et je continue d'y croire. Par contre, les hôpitaux sont pour les gens malades.

Si nous voulons garder les gens en santé, on doit se tourner vers les soins primaires. Les soins primaires ne devraient pas se retrouver dans les hôpitaux mais bien dans la communauté. J'utilise souvent le dicton « Une pomme par jour éloigne le docteur pour toujours ». La promotion de la santé et la prévention de la maladie, c'est un investissement qui en vaut la peine maintenant et à long terme. Les centres de santé communautaire sont les mieux équipés pour avoir un impact direct et à long terme sur la santé des gens et des communautés en s'occupant des soins primaires, de la promotion de la

santé, de la prévention de la maladie, du développement communautaire etc.

J'espère que dans le prochain budget nous verrons une augmentation des budgets des centres existants pour nous permettre de prendre de nouveaux clients et de commencer de nouveaux services, ainsi que la mise sur pied de nouveaux centres de santé communautaire, surtout dans les régions du Nord et les régions rurales.

Je vous remercie. Je suis disponible pour répondre à vos questions en français ou en anglais, si vous en avez. J'ai également des détails des montants précis des initiatives que j'ai proposées. Merci.

**The Chair:** We have time for about one question from each caucus, beginning with the NDP.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** You mentioned that doctors could open up a private clinic—I think you used the word “clinic”; I don't know if it got lost in the translation, but I think you said an actual clinic—but you couldn't hire them. I didn't quite understand the distinction. Could you explain that for me, please?

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** They're funded differently.

**Ms Gélinas:** Exactly. We're funded differently. A community health centre gets a budget to hire people from the Ministry of Health. Right now, for example, I'm funded for 3.5 full-time-equivalent physicians. When that 3.5 full-time-equivalent money is spent, even if there is the need for more and even if there are physicians who are willing to work, I have no money to pay them.

But within the Ministry of Health budget there are many other envelopes. They could bill OHIP, or they could open a family health network. There are other opportunities, and those opportunities are well funded. My point was that some of those physicians are not interested in those models; they're interested in the community health centre model. But this model has not received any new money for the last 10 years and has not had any new community health centre funded in the last six years.

**The Chair:** We move to the government.

**M. Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** Merci, madame Gélinas, pour votre présentation ce matin. Mais vous avez dit que la province n'a pas fait parvenir des fonds pour de nouveaux centres de santé communautaire. Hier dans ma circonscription, on a fait une annonce de 2,9 \$ millions pour un nouveau centre de santé à Grand Bend. J'en ai trois dans ma circonscription. Je suis d'accord avec vous, et j'appuie des centres de santé, parce que vraiment dans les centres ruraux et dans le nord de l'Ontario, c'est la seule façon dont on peut faire parvenir des soins de santé primaires aux gens.

J'ai une question très brève. Si vous aviez le choix cette année et s'il y avait plus d'argent dans le budget de santé pour les centres de santé, quelle serait votre préférence : d'ouvrir de nouveaux centres de santé, ou bien de donner plus d'argent aux centres de santé qui sont en opération aujourd'hui ?

**M<sup>me</sup> Gélinas:** En ce moment si on finance, disons, un investissement de 5 \$ millions dans les centres existants,

le lendemain on est capable d'ouvrir nos pratiques, de prendre de nouveaux clients et de commencer à offrir des soins. Dans ma communauté, il y a tellement de gens sans médecins de famille que je dirais, commençons là parce que l'on est capable d'avoir un impact la semaine suivante. Si je recevais le salaire pour un médecin de plus, demain matin j'ouvrerais les portes puis je prendrais de nouveaux clients. Donc pour moi, dans ma situation, ce serait ma préférence. Ce serait bien d'avoir un plan où l'on peut également mettre sur pied de nouveaux centres, mais un nouveau centre prend un peu plus de temps à mettre en place.

0940

**The Chair:** We move to the official opposition.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Thanks, France, for your excellent presentation. Certainly I can attest to the fact that your clinic and your centre is a very, very busy centre, having my constituency office as a part of that building.

Primary care reform should be patient-focused, accessible, coordinated, continuous, comprehensive, appropriate, accountable and sustainable. You do that on a continuing basis. If we're going to enhance primary care reform and if we're going to try to enhance the finances appropriate to centres—and you're one of 57 centres around this province—would you like to see more money allocated to the wellness component of your centre? You talked about the determining factors of health. Wouldn't money allocated to wellness decrease the overall costs?

**Ms Gélinas:** For sure. This is the way a community health centre works: not only is investment in primary care important—and the government is presently looking at primary care reform—it has to be in conjunction with health promotion, disease prevention and community development based on the determinants of health. A physician and a nurse are very important when you are sick, but those are not the people who keep people healthy. What will keep people healthy is an investment in the determinants of health, and this is what you were talking about. If we don't invest in the determinants of health, we will continue to have more sick people.

Having access to a family physician is not a privilege; it's a right that everybody should have. Well, 25,000 people in Sudbury do not have that privilege, because they cannot access a family doctor. But once this is in place, in order to keep people healthy, the investment has to be in the determinants of health, and a community health centre is well equipped to work in the determinants of health.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame. That concludes your time. We appreciate your input today.

FIRST NATIONS INDEPENDENT  
FUEL HANDLERS CO-OPERATIVE INC

**The Chair:** Our next presenter is the First Nations Independent Fuel Handlers Co-operative. Please state your names clearly for purposes of the record. You have

up to 20 minutes, and if there is any time left over, we will ask questions. Welcome, gentlemen.

**Mr Willard Pine:** My name is Willy Pine, from the fuel handlers association, Mississagi First Nation.

**Chief Glen Hare:** My name is Chief Glen Hare, from M'Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin, and also the Robinson Huron Regional Grand Chief with the Union of Ontario Indians.

**Mr Randy Naponse:** Randy Naponse, vice-chair to the fuel handlers.

**Mr Pine:** Thank you very much, honourable members, for the opportunity to make a presentation before your committee.

Our organization appeared before your committee last year to address the issue of native gas rebates. We have been working with the province on this issue since 1996. We are here because we want to put forward our recommendation to reduce the red tape burden on native gas retailers, a burden that is driving our retailers out of business.

Before I describe our proposal to you, I would like to describe our organization's plans. As native business owners, we came together in 1996 to create the First Nations Independent Fuel Handlers Co-operative Inc, so that we could act as a group on tax issues facing native fuel handlers. Initially we formed to address the cash-flow problems that resulted from submitting remittance of native gas rebates to the provincial government. Once together, we recognized our common goal to have some ways to better our business and our communities. Our goal is to promote business in self-sufficient communities.

First Nations has been implementing a business plan to incorporate as members with the objective of becoming a buying group to provide bulk fuel purchases and distribute the reduced costs to our members.

**Chief Hare:** As First Nations Independent Fuel Handlers achieves its business objectives by benefiting our members, we also seek to improve the conditions of the communities in which members' businesses are located. Our communities are striving toward self-sufficiency and self-determination across Canada. First Nations fuel handlers will collect a cent on every litre of fuel sold by its members to support First Nations fuel handlers' start-up capital costs. Also, it is a long-term goal that half of this money will be deposited into a community fund once start-up costs are covered. With this fund, First Nations fuel handlers will be able to assist communities with funding local projects like schools, hospitals, arenas and community centres. Our vision is clear: prosperous businesses in strong communities.

The issue I want to discuss today relates to the rebate system for independent native gas retailers. For native gas retailers, the prompt collection of rebates is essential. To explain why this is so, let me outline how our current tax and rebate system works. Ontario legislation applies gas tax at a rate of 14.7 cents a litre. Qualified First Nations people are exempt from paying this tax if they buy gasoline for personal use from an authorized service



station on a reserve. Each eligible First Nations individual has a certificate of exemption from the Ministry of Finance. This is called a white card. If you have a white card, you don't pay tax on the gas purchased from an authorized service station. However, the gas retailer must pay tax on the gas that he buys to cover the tax expense. The retailer has to claim a rebate from the Ministry of Finance. The rebate is based on the gas sales made to exempt purchasers. Since the retailer is out of pocket until the rebate is received, an efficient rebate system is essential to keep these small businesses operating with positive cash flows. The current system is a manual system of vouchers; rebates can take up to two months. The system is full of delays, inefficiencies and the potential for errors that cost both the ministry and the retailer.

The First Nations Independent Fuel Handlers Association has developed a proposal for a point-of-sale system in consultation with the staff of the Ministry of Finance. If implemented, the point-of-sale system will give native gas retailers fresh opportunities to operate on a sound financial footing. The proposal is described in detail in our written submission, but I want to briefly explain why this new system is necessary and how it works.

**0950**

Why is this necessary? According to the cooperative's calculations, native gas retailers process approximately 400 vouchers per week. These vouchers represent the sale of approximately \$16,000 worth of fuel purchases and \$2,350 worth of tax exemptions. Accordingly, native retailers operate with a weekly deficit of over \$2,300. Further, the current system imposes an onerous paperwork burden on the Ministry of Finance and can lead to costly mistakes. Since each of the 132 First Nations gas retailers processes about 400 vouchers a week, the ministry must process approximately 2.7 million vouchers per year. In addition, fraud is hard to spot, because the system does not provide an automatic check of the validity of the white cards.

According to a report from Aboriginal Business Canada, a division of Industry Canada, many native gas retailers will fail if a point-of-sale system is not introduced to offer more timely rebates. In the past two years, eight Ontario native gas retailers closed their doors.

Our proposal is based on a system that has been operating to the benefit of both Alberta First Nations and Saskatchewan First Nations. It is a point-of-sale system. It helps retailers located on native reservations with the reporting of tobacco and fuel tax refund claims. This system is based on computer collection of exemptions, computer calculation of rebates and electronic transfer of information.

Retailers benefit from (1) timely receipt of rebates on a weekly basis, (2) a reduced costly administration burden and (3) better customer service through reduced delays and lineups at service counters.

The province benefits from (1) identifying stores with problems by reconciling electronically and automatically

the amount of tax-exempt fuel sold versus the amount of tax-exempt fuel purchased by a store and reporting variances; (2) greater control of white cards—the system can immediately confirm valid white cards and reject others, eliminating duplicate white cards; (3) reduce manual administrative and overhead costs; and (4) reduce storage space required for paper vouchers.

The association is proposing that the point-of-sale concept be tested over six months with three gas retailers operating on First Nations. Assuming that the system proves itself during the test, it would be implemented in all Ontario First Nations. The cost of the initial six-month test would be approximately \$120,000.

Conclusion: Without timely rebates, more native gas retailers will close. Our proposal is not costly. It will save the province money and help it to identify fraudulent transactions. Most importantly to us, it will save the First Nations gas retailers from the grim consequences of the existing voucher system.

This initiative has the support of the Union of Ontario Indians and the Chiefs of Ontario. It offers the province an opportunity to work with the native community on programs that jointly benefit both native people and the province.

When I appeared before your committee 12 months ago, I made the same request for the adoption of the point-of-sale system. I received an interested and sympathetic hearing, but there has been no change to the manual rebate system. Native gas retailers are still struggling to stay in business. This year, I hope our association will get more than your interest and sympathy. I hope that we get action that will keep native gas retailers in business.

Thank you, honourable members, for this opportunity to appear before you. I am happy to discuss my viewpoints on this proposal with you this morning.

**The Chair:** That concludes everyone's comments?

**Mr Pine:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you, gentleman. That leaves us with about two minutes. We begin with Mr O'Toole.

**Mr O'Toole:** Thank you very much for your presentation. I was on the committee last year, and I do recall, as I was the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance at that time, that it was brought forward. In fact, the Chair convened a committee called the small business advisory committee, and that issue went before that committee as well, and in fact had the support of members of the caucus, some of whom are here. I can only commit to you—and I'd be pleased to meet with you after—that we will pursue it. It seems to me that you have agreement all around except to implement it; that's what I would suggest. I appreciate your patience. I commit to you to try to bring it forward again, in time for this budget.

**Mr Pine:** We've got some of the cards that we're talking about to show you, the gas cards.

**The Chair:** As an example?

**Mr Pine:** Yes, as an example. The one you just held in your hand is the white card. That's the one where we

can't identify who owns the card. Then there's one with a picture on it and a bar code on the back, so when we swipe it, all the litres, the name of the person who owns that card—all the information is inside the POS system. At the end of the day, when we tally, it automatically goes to Revenue Canada in Oshawa.

It's been working in Edmonton. These are the vouchers that we have to fill out.

**Interjection:** Annually?

**Mr Pine:** Annually, yes. We have to fill them out every night, and every week when they drop the fuel, we have to tally how much fuel has been dropped.

**The Chair:** We move to the official opposition.

**Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre):** Thank you very much for your presentation. I was here the last time you made the presentation, and I am really disappointed that nothing has been done. The major problem you have is that you have a small businessman who is really dealing with the cash flow problem and most of them don't have the financial ability to do that without some great difficulty to their operation. I don't understand why this hasn't been done. It seems to make sense for a variety of reasons.

Can you tell me, have you had communication with the ministry? I know they're looking at it, but they've been looking at it for a number of years.

**Mr Pine:** We had numerous meetings with the directors of the Ministry of Finance. That's Terry Hing and Pauline Goral. They're working as hard as they can, but they have to wait for the higher-ups in order to get any dollars for our POS system. All the time they say, "Our budget has gone in, but we're not hearing anything." So they've made the budget, apparently, but we didn't hear the results of that budget to go ahead with this POS system.

**Mr Kwinter:** I noticed that you list all the problems with the existing system. The major one is cash flow, but you also talk about fraud, you talk about mistakes, you talk about clerical errors. Have you done any projections as to how much that is costing right now, as opposed to what it would cost to put in the system?

**Mr Pine:** The ministry and the fuel handlers sat down at one point to discuss this whole thing. I'm pretty sure it might be inside the pamphlet you've got there.

**The Chair:** We move to Mr Christopherson, for the NDP.

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you, gentlemen, for your presentation. I also was here last year and heard you make exactly the same pitch. It made a lot of sense last year, it makes more sense this year and if they don't do anything, it's going to make even more sense next year.

In the last two days I thought it was interesting—for a government that keeps yapping about wanting to do things about red tape, it really does depend on whose red tape we're talking about. Yesterday we heard from a lawyer dealing with appeals and other representations for people on ODSP, the disability program, and the paperwork there in the last few years has gone up four or five times.

You're here again today pointing something that, as Monte Kwinter has pointed out, makes good sense, no matter how you want to look at it, to take this step. The only thing I have heard that suggests that anybody gave a damn after you made your presentation last year was from Mr O'Toole, who said there was some kind of committee, headed up by Mr Spina, that supported this and that there was support in the caucus. What I don't understand is why the story ended there.

Perhaps Mr O'Toole could provide an answer, Chair, or you could, because all I heard was that you guys did all this great work and you were on the side of the angels. And then the story ended. I missed the part where you then met with the Ministry of Finance and convinced them that this was the right thing to do and pursued it through caucus and cabinet. I missed that part, so maybe you can fill us in.

**The Chair:** Did you have any other comments before I give a brief summary of what Mr Christopherson is asking for? Go ahead.

**1000**

**Chief Hare:** It's 2003 now, and this country has computerized. What we're facing here is manual business with our finances, with First Nations businesses, when we see these papers here. We were down at the office and they're piled up like this. They go through each and every one of them manually. This is the computer age now; we're there. Why is this business not there?

I guess the biggest problem for First Nations, but also for the province, is the abuse of these cards. I walk into my own fuel station at home and I'll bet you once a day there will be somebody in there who is non-native using these cards. That really upsets me, and it upsets the non-native population. They come to me and say, "How can he or she get away with this?" Even with our regular status cards, every now and again there's a group of people—not our people—who are caught selling our status cards at \$50 apiece, and they're getting away with it.

This is a big step: our picture, who we are, where we're from is all in that card, should it ever become real. That's our biggest one. Also, to speed up the process of the business, but the big one is the abuse. It's getting heavier, and we want to control it.

**The Chair:** Thanks, Chief. Let me just give a quick explanation of the committee. This was formulated under the Ministry of Finance tax revenue division. This committee was chaired by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. When it was started that was Mr O'Toole; it is now Mr Beaubien. I was on that committee representing the Red Tape Commission. A very specific point that we had brought forward was the processing of tax collection and the refining of the process of First Nations exemptions.

In addition to that, exactly what you said, Chief: this is the computer age; there shouldn't be a need to be filing manual paperwork when a lot of businesses around the province are able to file electronically.

The ministry is demonstrating, clearly by the fact that you've had some meetings with them, that they have moved forward in trying to address your issue. I can tell you that we would be happy to continue to push that to get the goal you want to achieve.

That's the explanation. I hope that satisfies everyone here for the short term.

**Mr Christopherson:** For the last 12 months, that and a buck got you a coffee.

**The Chair:** Thank you, gentlemen. That concludes your time. We appreciate it.

#### SUDBURY CHILD CARE COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK

**The Chair:** Our next group is the Sudbury Child Care Community Action Network. Please come forward. Welcome.

**Ms Lois Mahon:** Good morning. My name is Lois Mahon, and I am here on behalf of the Sudbury Child Care Community Action Network. I was anticipating that a parent—she's here. She's coming from a small community outside Sudbury so I'm sure that driving conditions weren't that great.

**Ms Jo-Ann Gagnon:** Actually, my babysitter cancelled on me.

**Ms Mahon:** And her child care was interrupted.

**Ms Gagnon:** Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of our community's youngest citizens, our children. My name is Jo-Ann Gagnon. I am a mother and a special-education teacher. I am here representing the Sudbury Child Care Community Action Network.

I would like to bring to your attention today that day care centres in the city of Sudbury are in great need of your support. A survey of local day care centres completed by the child care action network two weeks ago indicates that 60% of our facilities are operating in a deficit position, even though drastic measures such as cutting staff wages and raising fees have been undertaken. Without a substantial increase in funding from the province, it will become impossible for our child care facilities to serve our children.

As parents, grandparents, taxpayers and future pensioners, the issues facing regulated child care centres are relevant to you. As representatives of the government, you are inextricably linked, entrusted by the people to aid in the design of a system that should take care of our most valuable assets. Thank you for taking on this enormous responsibility.

The expansion of the Early Years centres in Sudbury demonstrates our acceptance that the first six years of a child's life are crucial developmental years. The Early Years centres and licensed child care facilities both have enormous potential to aid children in developing skills that will prepare them for the rest of their lives. Unlike the Early Years centres, however, daycare centres offer an essential service: child care.

Are we aiding our child care centres in achieving maximum outcomes for our children? What is happening in Sudbury?

At present, daycare is affordable only to high-income earners or the very low income fee subsidy recipient. Middle-income parents are paying an average of \$30 per day per regulated space. For many of my friends it doesn't pay to go to work. They say they can't afford to go to work. Parents with infant children or children with special needs have it even tougher. After being subjected to long waiting lists, they are often unsuccessful in securing a full-time child care space.

Imagine a community in which all families could have equal access to affordable child care, the provision of quality child care that would support all areas of child development, where qualified staff would be supported and maintained with appropriate wages, staff development and time for planning, preparation and program development. Child experts continually state that high-quality child care gives children the best possible start.

Investments in early learning programs have a big payoff for everyone. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's recent research supports the findings of the Perry Preschool Project. This project tracked the development of children for 25 years. It showed that every dollar that been invested in education in the early years saved \$7 in the form of lower dropout rates, lower social assistance rates and lower crime rates. Furthermore, families who use daycare centres also benefit.

As a consumer of regulated child care myself, I can attest to feeling little stress when I leave my son at daycare. I know that he is being well cared for by qualified early childhood educators, who provide him with a stimulating and nurturing environment. I sleep well at night with the assurance that my son's daycare will be open tomorrow.

**Ms Mahon:** I'm speaking on behalf of the Sudbury Child Care Community Action Network. The network is a local action group made up of interested parties advocating for quality child care as envisioned by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

We are here today to let you know that daycare in the city of Sudbury and in this province is in crisis. Funds from the federal early childhood initiative were invested by the provincial government in programs such as Ontario Early Years centres, autism, and Healthy Babies, Healthy Children. These are wonderful programs for some children and some families. However, these programs are not child care. Many of these programs can and should work together with daycares to provide comprehensive services that children and families need.

Provision of quality daycare is an investment in the future of communities and must be an integral part of the children's services and education available to all children in Ontario.

National and international bodies and researchers recognize that early childhood education and care are key components of community economic development, a

population health approach, preventing crime at the community level, and social equity and inclusion. However, because of the crisis we face in this community, daycare will not exist in the near future. This will have a serious impact on the future of our community and this province. In a recent presentation to our city council, we identified that most of our daycare centres have faced serious financial pressures. Increased occupancy costs, municipal taxes, garbage pickup and playground inspections, combined with a requirement to honour pay equity with no funding and capped wage enhancement grants, have left our child care system on the brink of disaster.

Playground inspections, as directed by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services, cost daycare centres \$200 or more annually. No one will argue with the necessity to have such inspections, but obviously the cost of these inspections cuts into current budgets.

Centres that have expanded to meet the needs of the community no longer receive the wage enhancement grant that was made available to ensure more fair, equitable wages for staff. Centres who wish to pay all staff an equitable wage must foot the bill from already stretched income.

Pay equity is a significant problem for our Sudbury centres. Since child care programs are bound by law to continue pay equity increases, they will accumulate unsustainable debts or operate in contravention of the legislation. Under the law, community-based boards of directors who are parents assume the liability. Some centres in Sudbury estimate that they will be bankrupt by 2003 if they continue to make adjustments without government funding.

Research indicates there is no greater indicator of the quality of care that a child receives than the quality of the caregiver. In order to perform their responsibilities as quality child care educators, staff need time, resources, facilities and equipment. In other professions, these criteria would not be questioned, but in early childhood education and care, staff are doing without or with the bare minimum. Our society is now aware of the importance of the early years to the development of children. If the early years are so important to a child's development, how is it that we think staff should attend meetings without pay, work without resources and plan activities on their own time? How can we accept that such an important profession work for pay that is less than in call centres in our community? Sudbury's early childhood educators are leaving the profession to work in any field that gives them the opportunity for better wages, where they can receive benefits and where they feel they do not need to volunteer their time in order to carry out their professional responsibilities.

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Provincial downloading means that municipalities have now increased funding obligations without money to provide adequate child care services in their communities. Child care programs and services previously funded by the province are now cost-shared, with the province putting in 80% and the municipality 20%.

Administration costs are evenly split. The result is that each municipality is making different choices and decisions about local child care services to try to cope with an impossible situation.

The city of greater Sudbury is coping with additional costs by cutting back services, which include garbage pickup to non-profit agencies and businesses. Although this may seem minor, some centres are paying up to \$50 a week for garbage pickup.

Before the amalgamation of Sudbury with the smaller surrounding municipalities, daycare centres in smaller towns were exempt from municipal property taxes. Now, in the city of greater Sudbury, they are charged but don't have the funds to pay. We have recently asked our city to remove these costs in their 2003 budget.

In the current situation, the downloading has caused a spiral effect, creating hardships for our community. We have suggested to our city that they need to advocate to the province to honour its commitment to pay equity, to eliminate local costs for daycare centres that are within their discretion and, above all, not to ask us to increase fees. Full-fee parents cannot absorb any more fee increases. Currently, the amount of daycare fees parents pay is equivalent to or even more than rent or mortgage payments.

Child care is now only accessible to high-income earners or very low income fee subsidy recipients. The middle-income family has no choice in who will care for their children. They are forced to leave their children in unlicensed home settings with unqualified caregivers. Many times, only basic care is available without the quality early childhood experiences that Dr Fraser Mustard indicates are crucial to development.

In this community, infant care spaces are at a premium. Centres are unable to provide this needed service because of the lack of funding to operate. Again, families who need to work have no choice in who will care for their children.

This government's support to children with special needs, such as autism, infant development and Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, is admirable. However, like the rest of us, the families of these children need to work. Child care needs to be supported and enhanced staffing made available to ensure the benefit of these special programs can be continued in daycare, making daycare accessible for all children. It isn't feasible to suggest that existing staff-child ratios would be able to meet this need.

Our vision is a community in which all families and their children would have access to quality, affordable child care. We ask you to share this vision, and in doing so we would ask you to:

Develop a plan to give every child universal access to high-quality early childhood education and care and to stabilize the services here in the city of Sudbury and throughout the province—stabilization must include moving away from a targeted, subsidy-based system to a publicly funded system that would adequately support the needs of our community;

Immediately restore pay equity for childhood educators and analyze early childhood education and child care workforce issues, including attracting and keeping staff, career advancement and enhanced training;

Work with the federal government to secure adequate funding to carry out what is needed to provide quality care and education; and

Stop the negative effects of downloading to municipalities.

**The Chair:** That leaves us with two minutes for questions and answers, complete, I remind committee. We begin with the official opposition.

**Mr Bartolucci:** I'll try to keep it within two minutes. Jo-Ann and Lois, thanks very much for your presentation. It was certainly an enlightening presentation—"stop the negative effects of downloading to municipalities." Certainly over the course of the last little while—and I'll talk fast because I have two minutes—we've seen a city council having to cope with closing recreational facilities which would enhance daycare activities. The reality is, the answer is simple: you're telling this committee at pre-budget, "We need more money and the province has to live up to its commitments to municipalities." There is a \$10-million shortfall that the government did not give to the city of Sudbury when the amalgamation took place. What would that do with your programs if some of that was allocated to daycare activities?

**Ms Mahon:** I think the opportunity to ensure that there's a comprehensive opportunity for families and that kind of support. The other thing is that, as our municipality is trying to make decisions about what they will support and what they won't support, it certainly would assist them in doing that.

**The Chair:** Thank you. We move to the NDP.

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you for your presentation. I still find it remarkable that a government that puts itself out as the only party that really cares about kids and families does so little for children and in fact does so many things that hurt them.

First of all, take a look at the education system all the way through and the damage that's been done there. The clawback of the federal child benefit is a disgrace. That's money that's provided for kids in poverty, and this government cuts that dollar for dollar from the money they receive from the province.

The question I want to get to, the third matter, is that there was a federal initiative—for the life of me, I can't think of the name of it—for child care that offered the province the opportunity to tap into millions of dollars, and they haven't spent it yet. Are you familiar with that?

**Ms Mahon:** I am somewhat familiar. My understanding is that some of those dollars were put forward in some of the other early childhood initiatives but that daycare was not included in any of that.

**Mr Christopherson:** Let's just say for the sake of argument that this government gets re-elected with a majority and follows the same sort of path. Where are you and where are the kids in Sudbury in 2008?

**Ms Mahon:** My concern and the concern of our local network and our child care providers is that without the infusion of some funding there will be no regulated quality child care system.

**The Chair:** We move to the government.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I want to thank you very much for your presentation. Being a parent of three young boys, and with my wife working as well, we've got a pretty busy household and we have a private child care arrangement. But I understand how important a decision it is for parents to make sure that the child care their children are going to receive is of the highest quality. It's obviously an important decision that parents make.

But I also know that a few years ago, Ernie Eves, while he was Minister of Finance, initiated a tax credit for working families to assist with child care costs. You've essentially said that you don't like that concept at all, yet the provincial government, to the best of my knowledge, is allocating millions of dollars to this tax credit. It has a couple of benefits. First of all, I think it targets the available resources to families who need it most; second, it allows the parents choice so that they can find the child care arrangement that's most to their liking.

**The Chair:** Question, please.

**Mr Arnott:** Why do you completely reject that model of assistance for families?

**Ms Mahon:** To us, the model doesn't seem to work. It does not provide the choice, the anticipated result; it doesn't, for us, provide that opportunity. For many, many families, particularly middle-income, the fees for regulated quality child care do not cover the cost to operate that program, so the choice that is available remains for those who are at either the lowest end of the income spectrum or the highest. So the intent, however admirable, of that project, in our opinion, does not work. We think that quality daycare, regulated daycare, needs to be included in that choice, and for that to work, another system has to be in place, and that's funding directly to those programs.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We appreciate your input. That concludes the time.

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## WATERCREST

**The Chair:** Our next presenter is WaterCrest. Do you have a PowerPoint?

**Ms Ann Watson:** I was told that I could bring overhead slides, and unfortunately the message didn't come through, so I can speak to the slides here. The handout that I've given you is actually the eight slides that I intended to speak to, followed by a submission that I made to the pre-budget consultation last Monday in Toronto.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Please state your name for the record, and welcome.

**Ms Watson:** Certainly. My name is Ann Watson. My business's name is WaterCrest. I'm here to ask the

government to consider the creation of women-oriented investment funds.

What I intend to cover today is who I am and why I got to this point, what the issues are with respect to women in venture capital, what the benefits to the government would be of taking some initiatives in this area, why extra help is specifically required in Ontario, and specific comments as to the form of assistance I'm requesting that the government consider.

First of all, I'm Ann Watson. I was born and bred in Ontario. I have a bachelor of commerce from the University of Toronto and an MBA from Ivey. I've spent 12 years in the investment banking industry advising companies on mergers and acquisitions and corporate finance, most of that time in Canada, some of that time in New York and London, England. For the last four years I've been advising private companies on raising financing for venture capital, and I was a fund manager of an enterprise called Bright Spark in Toronto, which was an incubator for information technology companies. So those are the qualifications that I come with to present this idea.

For the last six months I've been assessing the opportunity in Ontario to establish a venture capital fund that would direct money to women-led businesses. In the United States there are over \$100 million of funds for women-only investments, and for women in minorities there is over \$1 billion. I think there's a significant opportunity here in Ontario to create this fund. I'd like to talk to you about why that opportunity exists, what the benefits to the government would be if someone were to pursue that opportunity, and some help that I need in order to get to that point in time. Essentially I'm an entrepreneur asking for a little bit of assistance in getting going and tapping a market that has huge benefits to the government.

The headline statistics with respect to women in venture capital in Canada and Ontario are that over 50% of new businesses are started by women, and yet less than 5% of venture capital gets directed to them. In other words, in addition to their own business risk, a man has about a 19 out of 20 chance of getting venture capital, whereas a woman has about a 1 in 20 chance of getting venture capital. I would suggest to you that this sort of system is a free-market system but it will self-perpetuate if there's not a catalyst brought to the system.

Probably the most work follows behind the next sentence, which is, "The fundamentals are the same." I've undertaken extensive studies of mostly US work that looks into the characteristics of women in business versus men in business and why this gap exists, including one study that studied the myths associated with women in venture capital and another landmark study that looked at businesses started in the last 10 years. In other words, if you boil it all down, throw away all your old notions of your mother or your grandmother starting a dress shop on Main Street, women businesses are now fundamentally the same as men businesses. If you look at these aggregative studies, there is no difference in the type of

business they're starting, the size they're now growing their businesses to, the experience they had when they had started these businesses up, the growth records they achieve—in fact, in one of the studies, more women had high-growth businesses than men did—and their education, with the exception of a bit of a gap in engineering.

The issues in this marketplace are access to capital and the networks. For those of you who are familiar with venture capital, be it labour-sponsored or other forms, most of the deals that these venture capitalists end up completing come from a network of advisers, which is what I used to do, advise these companies. You sort of brush up a company and present it to the venture capitalists. Again, it's just an evolution; it's how things have evolved over time. It's a very male-dominated marketplace.

Why should the government care about this? That is the next slide, "Benefits to the Government." Like any venture capital fund, they will create jobs and they will help companies grow. But I would suggest to you that a fund that's directed at women businesses will create different jobs and help different companies grow, and that will create a broader base of entrepreneurship in the economy. It will get more venture capital both raised and allocated in the province. Women businesses hire about 52% women and 48% men; men businesses tend to hire 62% men and 38% women. But still, women businesses tend to have more equitable hiring practices, certainly something that the Ontario Women's Directorate cares about.

We also need more women role models. In the benefits section of the paper that I submitted to the Ministry of Finance, you'll see that all these benefits tie to some of the initiatives of the government and private enterprise making suggestions to the government. But I specifically look at the task force on entrepreneurship and prosperity, and many of these benefits link directly to that task force.

Why am I here asking for extra help? Well, we know from the US that a catalyst is required. In my research, I believe the best way to start one of these funds is to have it be a labour-sponsored fund. The main reason for that is that we know women entrepreneurs are investors. Therefore, you would get free marketing of your fund through your retail broker. Any retail broker has a financial incentive to let a women entrepreneur know about this fund if they try to sell them this tax-incentivized product. So this will help the whole perception of the risk to women accessing venture capital.

But in Ontario there is a problem with the system for this type of fund. These labour-sponsored funds are marketed through wholesalers, who then market through to a retail broker. In Ontario, about 95% of the wholesalers are men and 75% of the retail brokers are men. Male investors actually make better clients for retail brokers, because they trade more and generate more retail commissions. It's the way the system has evolved. I'm not suggesting that the government should do anything about this; I'm just saying there's a problem in getting a women-oriented fund through the system because it's a

new product that's untested, and male investor behaviour, which I have also studied extensively, will not necessarily be attracted to this. In other words, the problem, which is the entrepreneurial risk, is the women's business market. The access to raise the money is where the issue is.

I have come to the government suggesting that you take out of your drawer a piece of legislation that you put in place in the last few years, which directed more money toward research, and use exactly the same legislation to direct more money to women-oriented business. If you recall, research-oriented investment funds allow a fund to offer an investor an extra 5% tax credit, provided that the fund makes investments in research-oriented businesses. "Research-oriented business" is defined as the percentage of spending on research and development. My proposal is that we establish women-oriented investment funds and that any fund that invests the majority of its assets in businesses that are defined as women-oriented would also qualify for a 5% tax credit. This would allow for a successful approach, I understand, in the retail market.

I've actually been out to talk to most of these wholesalers. Some of them would be interested if we got this 5% tax credit; some of them still wouldn't be interested. They think it's a significant marketing hurdle. In other words, the fund would have a fighting chance in the marketplace. So it's not direct government intervention; it's using an established precedent to address another important marketplace.

I've had some discussions with internal staff at the Ministry of Finance, in the tax department, and they acknowledge that this would be a simple amendment to existing legislation. I've offered to share some of my data on women-oriented businesses, but because this is a public forum—I'm actually asking you to set something up so that somebody else can compete against me—I have not shared all of my background data.

I'd like to leave you with one thought. There is a global organization called the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. They look at all aspects of entrepreneurship—age, gender, household income, culture, education—and their number one recommendation as to how to increase entrepreneurship in an economy is that a country should do anything it can to help get more of its women participating in their own businesses. There is no other single initiative a government can undertake to increase entrepreneurship.

I ask you to consider taking existing legislation out of the drawer, amending it—the only requirement is to decide what a women-oriented business is—and allow entrepreneurs such as myself, and I'm sure I'll have some competitors, to go to the marketplace and try to raise money, and then to put some money into women-led businesses.

I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much, Ms Watson, for a fascinating presentation. I'll first turn to the New Democrats.

1030

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you for your presentation—very interesting. You mentioned that the United States has done something. I wonder if I could ask a two-part question. Could you expand on that a little in terms of what approach they used? Does it vary state to state or is it a federal initiative? Secondly, are you aware of anything similar in other jurisdictions across Canada?

**Ms Watson:** In the United States it's a federal initiative undertaken by the Small Business Administration. They have what they call small business investment companies. Basically the concept is that you go out and raise some money and the government will match the money. You increase the amount of capital you have to invest. So if you want a \$40-million fund, maybe you only have to raise \$20 million.

They had a program up until 1996 called a special small business investment, and that is when they went out and encouraged a lot of these women and minority funds to be raised. It got a little bit out of control, so they pared it back in 1996, although they still have a few special criteria you can do to augment your capital.

I think there's a very important lesson to be learned as to how they got a little bit out of control in the United States. It has to do with the definition. They said that a person of minority, a woman, had to fill a specific role in the organization. They had to be either chairman or president. You'll note that in the detail of my briefing paper I suggest a lower barrier, that we consider women founders who maybe own 10% of the equity, to qualify for a concept like this, at least in the beginning years. So we can learn some things about definitions from them.

The great thing about their program is that because of their matching, they could play with things a little bit more than in the system we use through labour-sponsored funds. Really, the only thing I have known that's been done across all of Canada has been research-oriented. Your government decided research was a priority and found a way to do it through the existing mechanism.

In terms of other women's funds, there are none in existence yet in Canada, to the best of my knowledge. There is a group out of Montreal trying to raise private institutional money. That has a few problems. First of all, they don't get the free advertising that you do in the labour-sponsored. When I mention that the women are the entrepreneurs, you get to get out and shake them and tell them that fund is there and decrease the risk perception. They've been trying to raise money for over a year. I wish them the best of luck, but I know the institutional market very well from other business experience and there have been no new funds financed in all of Canada for nearly two years. It's a private marketplace, and it's hard to influence.

The only other thing worth mentioning is that the Prime Minister has set up a task force on women entrepreneurship. Certainly I will be going to them and, if I'm successful in this venue, asking if they might even match the tax credit federally. If you saw fit to do it here, they might do that.

The other thing that people will be asking for there, I think—there are pockets of money that will invest on the federal level, EDC and BDC, for example. They would make great side investors for me, and certainly I would ask for that. But the federal government sees it as stacking, that you get a tax credit and you want money over here, so they're not very—and I think one of the most interesting things I found out when I was doing this was that if I had been doing it in any other province but Ontario, I probably could have got an Industry Canada grant. I've had to do all my research and come up here and talk to you, everything, on my own penny. But I'm an entrepreneur and that's OK.

**The Vice-Chair:** We want to keep the questions going, so I'll turn now to the government side. Mr O'Toole has a question.

**Mr O'Toole:** Thank you very much for a very interesting presentation. I think you should send your story to Dianne Buckner from Venture and maybe she would give you some help. There are quite a few leading women's voices actually in the business community.

**Ms Watson:** Yes, there are.

**Mr O'Toole:** A lot of commentators in both media are certainly female today, which is good. So I'm sure you'd have a very receptive audience.

It's a neat marketing proposal that you're suggesting. It's more like the ethical funds that are catering to a certain kind of discriminating investor. I'm disappointed to think that LSIFs haven't been an opportunity for you. I'm not sure that you've pressed that long enough and hard enough, because that probably is the most logical venue to mount a fund.

**Ms Watson:** Could I leverage it?

**Mr O'Toole:** I understand what you're saying. In fact, there were problems with the original labour-sponsored funds. As you know, they weren't actually investing them; they were holding them in paper. They had to strengthen—in fact, some of the tax credits have been reduced, both federally and provincially, and we did reinforce them.

That would be my sense. Otherwise, it would be a rules game, as you've just described it. Either the investor or the recipient of the venture funds would be monitored or reporting based on the formation of the boards of directors—

**Ms Watson:** My proposal is the fund would have to, just like a research-oriented fund.

**Mr O'Toole:** What's your research with respect to the penetration of the female investor? That would be an interesting one to know. If I was a seller, a broker, trying to sell stuff, and I knew that I could attach more clients to my file by saying, "Target this particular group"—I would think there's a lot more money. I think the group would be much more attracted to these kinds of funds that you're describing.

**Ms Watson:** Thank you for your question, because I would like to tell you that I have talked to each of the major fund distributors in Canada. I had one of them so excited, thinking, "This is great. We've finally got a

woman's product." There's a market there. I'm told there's even one bank that has more assets under administration by women than it does by men. However, that same person who was so excited went out and did their own little informal test marketing, and they came back and said, "Ann, we can't do it. We can't push this product through the system the way it is. It won't work." I kept banging ahead. So, first of all, I have talked to nearly everybody.

**Mr O'Toole:** On the investor side?

**Ms Watson:** I have, yes.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Sampson has a question.

**Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga Centre):** No, it's OK. Continue with this line.

**Ms Watson:** I have talked to all of the wholesaling people, and they all say there is no way anybody is going to invest in a product that has exactly the same tax credits as anybody else but is addressing an untested market. Forget the women's issue; forget it. Then the fact that—and I hope you will appreciate that I've not mentioned discrimination at all in this presentation—you will have some resistance, because there will be people whom this does not appeal to. However, I think they are the ones who in fact suggested back to me, "If you could get an extra tax credit, you would have a fighting chance in this system."

I would also say, and it's partly in my presentation, that if you don't proceed, I'm probably not going to go ahead because I don't know if I can make it.

**The Vice-Chair:** I want to give the Liberals an opportunity to ask a question too.

**Mr Kwinter:** Thank you very much for your presentation. It's really interesting, but I have some real concerns. You say, "The fundamentals (size of business, industry and management experience) are on par with businesses led by men"—so those fundamentals are the same with or without any kind of a fund. "The growth records of businesses led by women exceed those of men; the failure rate of women businesses is lower than for men; and yet, few women have used external capital..."

So it would seem to me the problem isn't that the women aren't able to do it. They probably have to be educated that the capital is available to them, and I don't know that that can be served by a fund or not. I think it's a massive education program.

But let me tell you, there are some incredible success stories. The president of Home Depot is a woman.

**Ms Watson:** Absolutely. That's not venture capital, but—

**Mr Kwinter:** No, but I'm just saying that there's a role model there. The president of Hewlett Packard is a woman. In Niagara-on-the-Lake, Mrs Lai owns virtually every hotel of any substance in that situation. The top producer at BMO Nesbitt Burns is a woman. The top producer at CIBC Wood Gundy is a woman.

I think that there's a distortion when you say, "Well, we have to really look after these women and give them some tax credits because otherwise they're at a disad-



vantage.” Yet in your presentation, you’re saying that in virtually every benchmark, they’re doing better.

The idea sounds good. I’m just trying to think of what happens out there in the marketplace when you’re trying to sell this to somebody, and they’re saying, “You know, you’re looking for a solution to an area where there really isn’t a problem other than education.” I agree; there are lots of women who haven’t had the experience and know-how to access venture capital. So I’d like to hear your comments on that.

**Ms Watson:** Most certainly. I’d be pleased to address it. I separate the problem into two areas. One is, are there women’s businesses that need to be funded? The evidence says that they aren’t being funded, and they haven’t been. I tell you that the labour-sponsored funds have an even more appalling track record than the less than 5%. So the existing system is not working in a way for allocating capital to businesses, a lot because of history, a lot because of the fact that we’ve been through a high-tech phase. There are a lot of reasons why it’s not doing that, and particularly the agent network. That is one problem.

But I am not proposing that the companies that this fund invests in, these women-led businesses, get any additional tax credit. The tax credit goes to try and entice some investors to get the capital so that the fund, once it gets its capital, will actually be on a level playing field with any other fund out there, except that in order to qualify for the extra tax credit, it will have to invest in women-led businesses. The credit goes to the investors; it doesn’t go to the company. I believe, like you believe, that there are lots of women businesses out there that are worthy of venture capital. That’s the market opportunity, and that to me is sort of the entrepreneur saying, “Help me get to this marketplace.” However, because of the system that the government chose, not the small business administration type of route, doubling capital, but the labour-sponsored route, that’s the system to raise money.

It’s because of problems in that system that I am having great difficulty. Most venture capitalists have told me, “You’re just nuts; you’ll never sell this, even with the tax credit.” I was at the pre-budget consultation, and one of the guys said, “I don’t care; you’re still not going to make it.” But I believe, and some other people believe, that if I had the extra tax credit, I’d have a fighting chance. I think I could make it.

The tax credit is just to entice people to give some money, and then the money—I agree; there are women out there who will make great investment opportunities. I believe this fund can make at least a comparable rate of return to any other labour-sponsored fund.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you very much for your presentation.

CAMBRIAN COLLEGE OF  
APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

**The Vice-Chair:** Our next group that is scheduled is the Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology, if

they would come forward. Welcome to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

**Ms Sylvia Barnard:** Thank you very much. My name is Sylvia Barnard, and I’m the president at Cambrian College.

**Mr Murray Scott:** I’m Murray Scott. I’m the chair of the board of governors.

**Mr Luc Lafontaine:** My name is Luc Lafontaine. I’m the students’ administrative council president at Cambrian College.

1040

**Ms Barnard:** We would like to take a few moments and first of all thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you today. We do not have any handouts for you. We have done that purposely because we know that our association, ACAATO, has already presented and you’ve probably heard from a number of other colleges, so we felt that it would be redundant for us to continue to provide you with the same pieces of paper.

What we would like to do today is take the opportunity to very quickly review what it is that colleges are doing in Ontario and the challenges that we’re facing and are asked, and then also put a very specific local and human face on those challenges and on the information.

Simply to begin, Cambrian College is a college here in Sudbury that has been in existence for 35 years. We have approximately 4,200 full-time students and we educate over 9,000 people on a part-time basis in the area. We have a campus in Sudbury. We also have a campus in Espanola and a campus on Manitoulin Island. In addition to that, we also serve many people through distance education. That gives you a sense of the size of our operation. We are one of the 24 colleges in Ontario that serve over 200 communities.

Just to give you a little bit about the college system, as you probably have heard from all of your information, colleges have been funded from and continue to be funded from a fixed pot. That fixed pot is at \$762 million. Over the last decade, while that pot has remained unchanged—in fact, at one point it was over \$800 million; it is now down to \$762 million—our population of students that we are educating has increased by 34%. Also there has been an increase in inflation over a 10-year period. I think we all know what that’s like within our own dollars, and certainly the colleges have not seen any increase to their dollar amount for the inflation. Essentially we are funding using the same dollars, so our funding has gone down by 42% over a 10-year period. What happens is that because the pot is fixed, as the numbers go up, the amount per student obviously drops so that at this point instead of the over \$7,000 a student that we had 12 years ago, we now have \$4,379 a student to educate the students in the college system.

Just to put that into context for you, our counterparts in the universities have approximately an average of \$6,800 and secondary schools have \$6,700. So we are facing a growing challenge. We also have buildings that are over 30 years old and have required maintenance for them. We also have challenges of being able to hire

qualified staff and maintain our qualified faculty and staff to provide the high-level quality programs.

What does Cambrian do? Cambrian has a very strong focus on our technology and skilled trades area. In fact, we have 105 programs that we offer. Over 20 of them are apprenticeship programs and over 40 of them are in the trades and technology. What we have established is an opportunity where students come to us; they spend two years earning their diplomas. At the end of that time they also have covered all of the apprenticeship curriculum, which means that when they graduate they are ready to be apprentices, they can go out and work on their hours, they are recognized as apprentices and they do not need to return to school for any eight-week period of training as regular apprentices would. So there is a tremendous advantage to the economy to have these students graduating, going into the employment field and not having to be supported by the government or by the employer to go back to school at any time; they are now ready to work.

Let me give you an example of some of our growth areas. Four years ago we were taking in 30 millwright students a year. We are now taking in 120 millwright students a year. We are still trying to do it within the same facilities because we don't have the millions of dollars that are needed to upgrade our facility to the extent that we can. We have our employers snapping up those millwright students upon graduation. We have a 100% employment rate, and we have our employers knocking at our door saying, "Give us more." We are in the same situation with our electrical program and also with a number of our programs in the mechanical engineering side of things, where we cannot maintain the graduation rate to meet the demand.

At the same time, over the last five years, our employers across the area that we serve have contributed an average of \$1.5 million to \$2 million worth of donations and equipment a year in order to try and help us meet their need by providing the equipment that's needed. So the businesses really are contributing in order to prepare the employees for the opportunities that are out there.

At the same time, we are continuing to face a challenge of trying to hire our full-time faculty. That is a challenge because full-time faculty have a much higher cost. Unfortunately, what's happened is that across the province, colleges have taken the opportunity of hiring part-time faculty, which is a lower cost, in order to try and help meet their bottom line.

This year we have received \$315,000 from the government for academic equipment upgrades. It's the first money we've seen in five years, and \$315,000 is a fraction of what we've been needing and what we continue to spend. As I say, \$1.5 million to \$2 million has been what we've been putting in over the last five years on an annual basis through the grace of our partners who are providing the donations.

As far as the economic impact is concerned, our budget at Cambrian is about \$44 million. You can

quadruple that when you talk about economic impact because of the fact that we are a major employer. We also bring students into the area from out of town. We have a 500-bed capacity as of September 2003. So we're bringing students in to live in the community, they're spending in the community, and we're also putting employees back into the community.

**1050**

Today we are facing a snowstorm. There are a lot of heavy equipment operators out there. The folks who are making sure that equipment continues to operate are college graduates. If you flew here from Toronto you were flown by a plane whose pilot was trained at a college. The people who are maintaining that plane are college graduates. While you were here, if you came by car or if you were transported by car from the airport, college graduates are the ones who do the automotive parts design for the improvement of the automobile. College graduates are the ones who maintain those automobiles on the road. College graduates are the ones who are making sure that our communities are safe so that you can travel on those roads, because they are graduating from our police foundations and our law enforcement. If you have an accident and you need a quick response, it's our paramedics who are taking care of you.

Colleges have an incredible impact on the economic survivability and infrastructure of the province of Ontario. So what I would be suggesting is that an investment in the college system and bringing more dollars into the college system to allow us to expand our facilities and expand our programs is an investment in the economic development of the province.

I know that Murray would like to add a few words from the point of view of the board of governors.

**Mr Scott:** Sylvia suggested that I show how important it is for our community. Sudbury actually is a sort of a centre of excellence, if you like, in the north. We have a cluster of educational institutions: we have Cambrian, we have Laurentian and we have Collège Boréal. It's important to keep that centre of excellence running as efficiently as it possibly can. The risk is that the continuing deficits will detract from that, our ability to deliver to students is going to be impaired, and the good-news story that Cambrian is might be tarnished, if you like.

We've just had a huge infusion of capital from SuperBuild. Where we have the buildings there, it's important to make sure that we can actually use them effectively.

In Sudbury, as you know, we've had an out-migration of population of roughly 10,000, as I understand it. I think it's important to try to show students that there is potential here, that we can educate them in Sudbury and that there are opportunities in the job market in Sudbury. So from a community perspective, I would urge that we look at the investment that we can possibly make in the students both here and perhaps throughout the entire province.

**Ms Barnard:** I also know that Luc would offer some words from the student point of view.

**Mr Lafontaine:** In today's environment it's imperative that equipment and technologies are the most current so that graduates have the most up-to-date experience possible. Technology is changing so fast these days that we fear we won't be able to keep up and that we, the students, are going to fall behind.

We're also finding that more and more students are wanting to access on-line learning and that colleges aren't able to move as quickly in these areas. Cambrian has really gone to great lengths to provide services for us to be successful, like counselling, tutoring, computer access, student employment and so on, but our concern lies with the college's ability to maintain these services and support.

The impact of college graduates provincially and nationally is tremendous. We are the nurses, the paramedics, the firefighters, the hotel and restaurant managers, the mechanics, the accountants, the computer software experts who connect us to the world. So finding the solution to the problem is critical to the well-being of the province.

**The Vice-Chair:** OK, we have time for brief questions from each of the caucuses. I'll turn first to Mr O'Toole, and then Mr Sampson has a question.

**Mr O'Toole:** Thank you very much for your passion. It was quite evident in your presentation. Before I give it to Mr Sampson, I want to say that I too am a great supporter of the college system and also its ability to morph itself in terms of what the market needs. Gary Polonsky from Durham College in my riding and the new University of Ontario Institute of Technology is, like yourself, very energized and imaginative, forming partnerships and adapting. Money isn't the solution to everything but I certainly hope that SuperBuild and, going forward, the argument that your peers have presented, is addressed in the budget because of the double cohort and other issues. I'm supportive.

**Mr Sampson:** I would agree with John. I actually hold two degrees from universities but I would say to you that I think the colleges have probably not got the recognition they should for doing exactly what John has suggested, which is to ready students for a career and doing very important things that keep the wheels turning, the planes flying and the roads cleared etc. I would hope that when we convene to make a recommendation to the finance minister, we'll be able to deal with some of those challenges.

That's not to put down the university sector. I've always wondered whether or not there could be a better connection between the university sector and the college sector. Maybe you could comment on that, whether you think it's there, if it could be improved upon.

**Ms Barnard:** I'd be very pleased to comment on that. Actually, Cambrian has a number of university partners that it works with in North America. Even here at Laurentian University we have three collaborative programs where students move back and forth between the

two institutions and get a diploma and a degree at the end of it, and we are now branching out and working with a number of universities in western Canada. So there are more and more of those synergies happening.

I would agree with you that this is not to take anything away from universities. What we need, to have a fulsome economic plan and growth for our province, is a combination of the university grad and the college grad. Interestingly, university grads often are the ones with their research who are coming to the college grad technician to take that research and commercialize it. That's where economic growth happens, in commercialization of the innovation.

It has to be a relationship that is positive, one that continues to grow. Certainly in this area I would say that it is exemplary compared to some parts of the province because of the very close link we have between all three of our institutions, because we also work very closely with our francophone counterparts. We've very fortunate to have a university that is bilingual so we can work together in a three-way partnership.

**The Vice-Chair:** Turning now to the Liberal caucus, Mr Bartolucci.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Sylvia, Murray and Luc, thank you very much for your presentation and your passion. There's absolutely no question. It's interesting that my colleagues across the way—and I'm trying not to be political today—are enthused about community colleges, and indeed, they should be. They should also be very disappointed that over the course of the last 10 years tuition has jumped by 132%. They should also be very disappointed that the transfer payments have been significantly decreased.

You're familiar with the document *Voices from the Classroom*. You might want to explain to the committee members the significant impact that has taken place because of the lack of transfers and because of the lack of commitment on the part of this government—and that's all we can say: the lack of commitment on the part of this government—to colleges of applied arts and technologies. What has that done with programs? What has that done with student-teacher ratios? What has that done with even the appointments of chairs for different programs, Sylvia?

**Ms Barnard:** First of all, I'd like to preface my comments by saying that it is not only this government but the previous government that started the decline in the funding.

Also, I would like to acknowledge that Dianne Cunningham has done some work for us to get some funding. What we're saying is that it is not enough and it needs to be infused in the student funding, the per-student allocation. The extra funds are helpful but the per-student allocation is what helps us hire the teachers, turn on the lights and make the whole program work.

The kinds of things that we have had to make as choices at Cambrian is that we refuse to put 150 students in a class. That's not good pedagogy. You can't do it with the kinds of programs that we offer. So to keep our

class sizes in the 30- to 45-student range, which is where we know from research that we have the greatest success, we've chosen to go into a deficit. Our college in Ontario is in deficit and we are having to look at making some very serious choices. We've closed some programs even though there were opportunities for the students—we had student demand and we had employer demand—because they were too expensive for us to operate.

**1100**

We've capped programs. Millwright and electrical are examples where we could double the numbers if we could get the equipment and the facilities and have the money, per student, to fund those students appropriately so that we would be able to provide what our employers need in Ontario. We know in Ontario that we're facing a skills shortage. We're sitting with the solution, and what we need are the funds to make that happen.

As I say, as a college we've made a decision. We are in a deficit position. We have pushed ourselves to the absolute limit in that, and our next step is that we're now going to have to incur not only the bleeding but start amputating limbs if we don't get more money in order to provide the kind of programming that's needed.

**Mr Bartolucci:** That's the message I hope is taken back and given to the Minister of Finance.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you, Mr Bartolucci. Mr Christopherson?

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you very much for your presentation. I'm a huge fan of the college system. Mohawk College is in my riding. I'm sure you're familiar with it. I took a week-long course at Cambrian many, many years ago and it was actually around this time of year because I remember how cold it was. So I'm very familiar with your institution and the high quality of education that you provide.

I was interested in your comments earlier on millwrights. You mentioned millwrights and you said 100% placement and in fact you were getting calls from employers.

Just before I ask a direct question, I will preface it by letting you know that the Toronto Board of Trade and a couple of economists from some of the major banks, when they came in to see us in Toronto when we did our hearings there, acknowledged that our competitive edge is not around trying to have Canadian and Ontario workers work for less money than other workers around the world; that we can't win that game. Where we can win it is in the value-added, and the only source of that, let alone the most important, is education, and to underfund and strangle off our education system at all levels is really to blight our own future, because there is no other future for us.

Having said that, I'm just curious: when you said you had other employers calling and you had 100% placement, was that just in your immediate Sudbury catchment area or was it from outside the community as well, and if so, how far afield?

**Ms Barnard:** It is not only from the catchment area of Sudbury. Our millwright program is one that is very well

recognized across the province because it is one where the students, after the two years, are ready to be apprentices. They sign up, they don't have to go back to school, so there's uninterrupted service to the employer after that point. They are recognized.

The other is that millwright students can come out with a dual qualification. They can be mechanical and electrical at the same time, which again is very desirable. That's where we're getting the calls, from Quebec and from southern Ontario, large employers around the airport—I don't want to name any particular employers. But some very large companies that employ large numbers of electrical and millwright folks in the automotive industry and in the aviation industry have been in touch with us on an ongoing basis looking for our graduates and looking for our training. We are in fact doing some of our training at a distance for those companies to get some of their apprentices cross-qualified.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you very much for your excellent presentation. We appreciate it very much.

Our next scheduled group is Canadore College of Applied Arts and Technology. Are there representatives here from Canadore College? Apparently not. It's probably weather-related.

#### ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATORS

**The Vice-Chair:** Our next scheduled group after them would be the Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators. Would you please come forward and give us your thoughts and advice? Welcome to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. You have 20 minutes for your presentation. First of all, we'd appreciate you introducing yourselves for the purposes of Hansard.

**Mr Murray McDonald:** My name is Murray McDonald. I'm the president of CESBA, and I think we'll introduce each other as we come along. I'm just going to take three minutes and do the soft sell, which is who we are, who we serve, why we're here and why it's important that we stay in business.

I'm from Elliot Lake. I'd like to thank you for coming to the north. It's nice not to have to drive seven hours to do a presentation. When our mayor, George Farkouh, whom some of you know, I'm sure, came to Canada 45 years ago, they put him in the slow learner class because he couldn't speak English. He was a bright guy and he managed to put up with that, and today he's the mayor and a successful businessman. Hopefully, we won't go back to that. Today we have ESL classes where those students and, maybe even more important—well, not more important, but his parents would be able to go to ESL classes; I don't know if his mother ever learned to speak English properly.

I'm going to give you a couple of examples like that of people I've met. In 1990 the mines laid off 4,000 people in Elliot Lake. One of them was Bruce. Bruce

came to adult ed, took four courses, got his grade 12 diploma. I often use him to give testimonials, because Bruce will say, "That gave me the confidence to start my own business." He started a pet shop in Elliot Lake with his wife. It's been very successful. Luckily, 6,000 seniors moved to Elliot Lake, and they all have pets.

I guess earlier, when he was in the mines, he'd had a little bit of a drinking problem. So while his wife and he were working at the pet business, he went on and got a diploma and some qualifications to do counselling for people who have drug and alcohol problems. He's now working at the Oaks hotel. It's a 28-day program for drugs and alcohol in Elliot Lake.

He sends us students every now and again. One of the students he sent recently was a lady by the name of Lena. Her parents had moved to Elliot Lake. She had three children. She stayed in Toronto. Her children were really taken away from her. She was in a bad relationship with a man. She was probably working the streets. She came to Elliot Lake. She got herself cleaned up. She's come to school now, getting her diploma. She wants to be a counsellor. She's written to be accepted at college. She should be there this fall, because she'll have the marks and she's a bright lady. She's worked very, very hard.

A younger girl we're proud of is one who went to college this fall. She was only 19. She may have ended up like Lena, but she got back to school and got her grade 12 diploma and now she's at college in Barrie.

How long have I got? I'm only supposed to take three minutes, so I'm not going to take longer.

Alison is working at the White Mountain Academy of Arts in Elliot Lake as a teacher. She's got a degree in fine art, but she's found she's having problems with her shoulder from the pottery she's doing. So she wants to go into art conservation. She came to our school and said, "I need chemistry to get into Sir Sandford Fleming to do art conservation." She just finished her chemistry course, and this fall she'll be going there.

I'm going to stop with my examples and turn it over to Dave. Dave's going to do something a little more in the financial end and why it's important that our programs keep going financially.

**Mr Dave Neumann:** My name's Dave Neumann. I'm the executive director for CESBA. CESBA represents adult and continuing education departments in about 45 school boards. Within our membership we have the public, Catholic and francophone school boards.

You get a lot of people coming before this committee asking for more money, and I won't disillusion you; we are asking for the same thing. But what I want to point out is that there were cuts made to adult and continuing education, and we feel it was perhaps misguided to cut in this area.

There were decisions made to focus on the core business of school boards, and I think it was felt, wrongly, that adult education was not a priority. But if you think about the undereducated and underskilled in our society, there is a resource that's not being used effectively. Those are the people our school boards

service. So if you think about the positive impact our programs have, our adults are parents, and they become better role models for the learning of their children. So it does help the mainstream school system.

Our programs help to unlock the skills of new immigrants who come to Canada, and they play a more effective role earlier than they otherwise would. We help remove the employment barriers and open opportunities for these adults. We enhance employability skills, and we help individuals achieve self-sufficiency. We truly believe that what we are doing in serving this population is building the skills for Ontario's future and assisting Ontario in remaining and becoming more competitive in the global economy.

#### 1110

So we feel that the small amount that the government invests in this area pays big dividends for the economy and for society. However, we are hurting badly because of the discrimination: the cuts that were made a number of years ago where there isn't the same funding for an adult going back to school to finish a diploma as there is for the regular high school student, and yet the same needs are there. Diane is going to cover that.

We feel that on a macroeconomic scale, our school boards are cost-effective in delivering the programs that you've heard are delivered to individuals at a community level. If they ever went out of business—and some of them are—it would cost you more as a government to replace those programs and have someone else deliver them. Our programs are accessible at a community level in all regions right across Ontario, wherever school boards are in this business. And it's not a mandated program; it is an optional program, so some school boards have chosen to get out of it or have chosen not to deliver it. But we still have a lot of these programs around, and we're here to tell you that they are at risk and deserve to be supported.

Diane will speak next. She's our past president and is principal of adult and continuing education with the Simcoe Country District School Board.

**Ms Diane Cowden:** Thank you, Dave, and thank you for this opportunity. In the mid-1990s—in 1995—the government decided that the education dollars should be targeted, and rightly so, to elementary- and secondary-aged children and youth. That did marginalize the adult population aged 21 and over in school board programs. While that population is small, it's significant in terms of the contribution to the economy and the skills shortage in Ontario. If you are over 21, the dollars are 40% of those for a high-school-aged youth in a high school credit program. Many boards at that time mandated that their adult education programs be full cost recovery. With new envelope funding, it has become more and more difficult to pay those actual costs to deliver a high school credit program: the same qualified, certified Ontario teachers; the same accommodation, maintenance and custodial costs; the same textbook resource needs as with the new curriculum; and the same computer technology to maintain industry standards.

It is important for us to recognize the priority for newcomers to Ontario, whether they be from other provinces or other countries, and their special needs and the barriers they face when they come to the province. A secondary school diploma can assist those learners to meet their goals. Many of our graduates go on to college programs, as Sylvia was talking about just before. Many of our graduates go on to apprenticeship and, as we know, they need the high school diploma with a high level of skill in math and English to go into those apprenticeship programs.

Most of our graduates go into gainful employment. If any of you have ever been to a graduation from a school board adult program—and I think many of our MPPs around the table have been—you will remember the stories of those graduates as they walk across the stage and accept their high school diplomas. You can see the results of the high school program and the secondary school diploma in their hands and the fact that they are going to be contributing members to society and to the Ontario economy and good role models for their school-aged children in terms of the literacy, numeracy and assistance they are providing.

We have four recommendations, as you will see on page 4 of our presentation. We are recommending that school board adult and continuing education programs be reflected in policy and funding issues as a priority for this government and for Ontario.

We're recommending that the funding be equitable: a credit is a credit is a credit, a diploma is a diploma is a diploma, and the costs for educating youth in a high school credit program are the same as for educating an adult. That funding inequity should be moved from 40% less to equal funding.

English-as-a-second-language programs are delivered under the umbrella of grants for continuing education and other school board programs. That funding has not been adjusted for many years and there is no grant for accommodation or facilities, and yet in many of our border cities and towns, in our large centres, here in the north and even in rural communities, the need for English-as-a-second-language training and education is paramount. There is no funding or flexibility for school boards to house those programs.

International languages, or heritage language, is the only mandated program in a continuing education school board grant, and that funding has not been adjusted for more than 25 years. It just doesn't compute. The costs have risen and those grants have not increased.

We do see hopeful signs in our school board adult and continuing education programs. The Minister of Education, the Honourable Elizabeth Witmer, did speak to 150 delegates at our December conference. I have, from her speaking notes, the following quotes:

"Although there has long been a place in Ontario for adult and continuing education, I believe it is an area that is overlooked and not always well understood nor provided with enough funding.... Our government shares CESBA's commitment to ensuring students of all ages

can succeed in school—and in life.... You play a significant role in helping the province of Ontario achieve important goals."

We invite you to visit an adult and continuing education school within your school board, if one exists. We invite you to attend the June graduations, where those adults are moving on to their goals. We welcome the opportunity to work with the finance ministry and the education ministry surrounding the specifics of continuing education funding.

Thank you again for this opportunity.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you very much for your outstanding presentation. I should recognize and acknowledge Mr Neumann's presence here. Of course, he served with distinction in the Ontario Legislature and as mayor of Brantford.

I'd like to turn first to the Liberal caucus for questions.

**Mr Kwinter:** Thank you very much. David, it's nice to see you. David and I served in the Legislature together. You are bringing out a point that really hits home with me. I represent a riding that has one of the most diverse ethnic groups. At last count we had 87 different ethnic groups in my riding. When we talk about adult continuing education, there was a school that, with redistribution in the last round, is no longer in my riding, but most of the people who go there live in my riding. In its previous incarnation it was a major high school in Toronto called Bathurst Heights Collegiate. It became a total adult learning centre—total. You can imagine one of the largest high schools in Toronto totally occupied by people in adult education.

About a year and a half ago, that facility was totally shut down. I was inundated by people saying, "What am I going to do?" David, you said there are other alternatives. Well, for these people, there are very few alternatives, because it's a matter of economics and a whole series of problems. I can't believe the short-sightedness of having this group of people, who could be meaningful contributors to our society and to our economy, just absolutely cut off. Are there experiences in other parts of the province like that?

**Ms Cowden:** Very much so, and thank you for raising that and for your words of support and encouragement. Some jurisdictions, some school boards, got out of the business because they didn't feel they could cost recover. Perhaps they're from a rural or remote board and they couldn't redirect funds to support or underwrite an adult and continuing education program. Also, many school boards were forced out of schools. In growth boards, adult programs are forced out of buildings because they're needed for pupil places for elementary and secondary education, and so they have to lease spaces and there isn't the money to lease the space.

**1120**

It is a growing problem, and some boards have gotten out of the business of adult and continuing education, which hurts smaller communities. There's a school in every community. Think of what could happen if we could deliver in a small community, in remote, rural or

northern Ontario, an adult education program in a cost-effective way at the school and community level so that those adults could become contributing members.

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you for your representation. I add my acknowledgement of the reputation Mr Neumann has in public life that precedes him. Brantford and Hamilton are neighbours, so I know quite well his work both as mayor and as an MPP. Very shortly I'm going to be joining your club, the former MPP of Ontario club—and maybe a few others, except mine is by choice.

To get to the point, David would know that Jack Maga, who is the principal of continuing education for the Hamilton Catholic school board, came in to meet with me about a week and a half ago, which was very helpful in terms of putting into context your presentation and how it affects my community. It's very similar to Monte's experience. In Hamilton we've got 26,000 people enrolled in five different centres. That's a lot of people.

The other thing that was brought to my attention, and you can mention this in your response, if you wish, was that because of the difficulty of the new high school curriculum—and there are a lot of parents talking about the difficulty their kids are having—they're turning to adult education to supplement and shore up their studies so their kids can stay on top and hopefully graduate. Without that, they're worried about whether they will be able to graduate.

Hardly a week goes by in the House that some minister isn't talking about lifelong learning. I've got to tell you, it's insanity. To me, it makes absolutely no sense to talk about the importance of education, to talk about lifelong learning, and then turn around and cut the funding for the programs that provide adult education. How can you have lifelong learning that stops when you're a teenager or after college or even university, for that matter? It makes no sense.

What I see in the future is that either they won't be available, in which case our future workers and citizens are going to falter in going through lifelong learning because there is nowhere to go, or, and maybe this is their plan, the public provision of these services quietly dies away and then we see the private side of things come in to replace it because there will be a vacuum. There is this need and it's not going to go away; it's going to increase.

It seems to me that if we aren't extending the current education system to provide this where the expertise already is—it's in the public domain, it's paid for by the taxpayers—then we're going to find that people have to fork out money from their own pockets and pay for it privately, and somebody's going to be making a fast buck on this sort of thing. Maybe I'm missing something, but it seems to me that's the future we're heading for if we don't correct this.

**Ms Cowden:** I think that the clients, the learners, the adults we serve would not be able to go to private institutions and pay that kind of money. We believe that

funding in the short run will pay dividends in the long run. A small investment in the whole picture would pay huge dividends in the larger sense.

**The Vice-Chair:** Are there any questions from the government caucus?

**Mr Sampson:** The learners, as you say, are there to do a couple of things—to get their high school diploma, I would have thought. But I would guess, and maybe you can comment on this, more go on to something else—

**Ms Cowden:** Yes.

**Mr Sampson:**—because that's not enough these days in order to better your career or get a job or hold a job. Can you comment on that for me? How many of your students are doing something other than that, whether they're in your shop or with some sort of other private educator or in fact with the people who were here before you?

**Ms Cowden:** Many of our graduates go on to gainful employment. We know that employers are still looking for that high school diploma. The Ontario high school diploma means something. It means that you've met rigorous standards and you're accountable for what's on that diploma.

We are seeing many, many more—and I'm sure Murray and Dave could back me up on this—requests for apprenticeship training, which is a good thing for the skill shortage in the skilled trades, and many more for college. I think your attitude is right, that the adults, whatever past life and barriers they faced, now have decided to return. They are seeing that more education and further education is going to help them to be good family members, good providers and role models and will allow them the lifestyle that they see others around them achieving.

Some go to university. Not as many of our clients aspire to university, although we were just talking to the president of UWO at Minister Ecker's round table last Monday. He has first-hand knowledge of a person in his family who returned to an adult high school program and went on to Queen's University. So yes, some go to university, many more to college and to apprenticeships, and a great many go to good employment.

**Mr Sampson:** I need to get some sense from you very quickly, in two seconds or less, whether there are smarter ways to deliver this, in conjunction with people like the college sector. Can we think outside the box? You're asking us to reinvest. Can you think outside the box when we reinvest? Are we doing this in the right manner? I'd hate to do the some old thing the same old way just because that's the way it was done in the past. Is there a smarter way to do it?

**Mr Neumann:** I've seen the members from across Ontario. They're constantly going outside the box to find ways to deliver, to help these programs survive and to generate revenue by marketing, to fee paying. In some programs we're not allowed to charge fees, but, for example, some programs are marketed internationally to other countries: the learning of English and the development of skills to enter Ontario academic levels. I would

say the most entrepreneurial people in the education field are in the association we represent. They have to be creative and entrepreneurial to survive and they're constantly thinking outside the box.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you very much.

#### SUDBURY HEALTH COALITION

**The Vice-Chair:** Our next group is the Sudbury Health Coalition. Welcome to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. Would you please introduce yourselves for the purposes of our Hansard record.

**Ms Anne Seaton:** My name is Anne Seaton. I'm chair of the Sudbury Health Coalition, which is a branch of the Ontario and Canadian health coalitions. As you're well aware, there are very important meetings going on today and tomorrow and perhaps the next day.

We appreciate very much the opportunity to appear before this committee today. Dr Jose Blanco, who is a member of our committee, agreed to prepare and speak to the presentation, which he will do at this point.

**Dr Jose Blanco:** Thank you very much for the opportunity. I'll tell you briefly about myself. I am a PhD chemical engineer who benefited from both public education and public health. I came to Sudbury in the 1980s to participate in the great recovery of the nickel industry, which was going out of business, and cleaning up the air. I worked in research, production and management; that's my background.

As a spokesperson for this group of citizens, some of whom are sitting in the audience as well, I wanted to tell you that we are very concerned about the future of the province and the country. I wish to speak about several issues that have, in some fashion, been mentioned in the morning. You will recognize the themes that are coming.

1130

I'll start with my perspective of the country. It started with a compromise and was sealed by three handshakes. It grew by fostering good citizenship, by promoting trust among governments and between governments and the citizens, and by turning immigrants into citizens—and I know that because I am one of them. This has served us very well. We have an advanced province in an advanced country. We contribute to the world well beyond our size. Such people as the previous UN Secretary-General and the Aga Khan have expressed their view that Canada is the promising example of a pluralistic society. We are modern, efficient and cost-competitive. We achieved those results by applying one golden rule: that the interests of the elites and the population are tied together into a very strong and flexible civic platform. On that platform, we obviously want to build strong cities, transportation networks, good water and sewer systems, safe garbage dumps, clean air and a vital, vibrant cultural tapestry. Others perhaps will talk to you about the details of what's to be built on that platform; I want to talk to you about what supports it.

The platform sits on four legs: that we retain some power of regulation or control over key resources such as

forests, broadcasting, electricity, transportation and water; that we abide by the rule of law, collective bargaining and a flexible legal system with a healthy balance between group and individual rights; that we enjoy universal education, including accessible, affordable, high-quality public post-secondary education—and we heard something about that this morning; and that we have a universal health care system with a single payer and high standards. All four legs support the platform. I will not talk to you about two of them; I presume that others will.

I should mention in passing that I was particularly pleased to see that the government retained public ownership of the network that distributes energy. The value of the corridors could be inestimable. As technology develops 100 years from now, they would be totally unavailable.

Anyway, I will focus on two other issues, education and health, because those two issues can be divisive. I don't believe I am exaggerating, because the interests of the elites and the interests of the rest, which have been assembled into a strong and flexible pattern, are beginning to be under some duress.

Let me start with education. If we let money make the educational choices for us and the rich and powerful set up their own systems—and this is beginning to happen—other self-described interest groups will follow. They will split the platform, and we will all suffer. Elite education at elite costs will set the country back because it will mean restricted access and inadequate education for people with less money. It will also mean fewer skills, just as Ontario will need even more skills than our current population is capable of producing.

Ontario already has proportionately fewer post-secondary graduates than the US states against whom we compete for markets, and the recent statistics bear that out. This is not a matter of efficiency, because the net cost of producing those post-secondary graduates in the province of Ontario is lower than it is in the US, and the returns clearly are the same since we're selling the same products in the same markets.

The concern is because we are choking the internal Ontario supply, and you heard several presentations this morning that revealed to you where that choking occurs. It starts in preschool and goes all the way to post-secondary education, just as we need more skills. So we are recommending that Ontario develop and protect a good universal, accessible public education system from preschool all the way to the highest possible post-secondary level. We need more post-secondary education. There is no time to waste. Education is an investment, and it pays twice. It pays first because people with higher education not only get better jobs but they develop better health habits. They live longer and are less of a problem to the health system. In addition to that, they become more productive. So we are asking that you consider proper budget expansion to invest in those foundational initiatives from kindergarten to post-secondary,



with full access, to develop the potential of our young people so that they grow our economy.

My next issue is health. At 10% of GDP, health care is the largest investment that Canadians make. The monies that we spend on health care are not a cost; they are an investment in people. As health goes, so does the country. To repeat what I said about education, if we let money make the health care choices for us, some will set up their own systems, and this is beginning to happen. This will induce others to try the same thing. The end result will be that we'll split the solid platform on which we have attained the benefits that we are reaping today.

It takes time for health problems to become critical, but it takes even longer to fix them once they are critical. Run out of doctors, nurses or technicians and it takes a long time to recover. By the time that infant mortality has gone up, it is too late. By the time that life expectancy has gone down, it is too late. Having said it is an urgent problem, I want to define some of the background in the broad field of public health.

First, public health care is safer than for-profit health care. If we compare the two largest countries, the one to the south of us—the US—and ourselves, mortality data from 1980 to 1996 show that the rate of mortality for 11 major illnesses—cervical cancer, heart disease, stroke, asthma, childbirth—are significantly lower than in the US. It means that it is—or was until recently, anyway—safer, and for some illnesses even twice as safe, to be ill in Canada than in the US. That is a huge economic advantage that we want to protect.

Public health care is more effective than for-profit health care. The public, single-payer, tax-based health system gives Canadian babies and adults a longer life—that means healthier and more useful—than the alternative in the US. The Canadian system is more effective, something that we are seldom in the habit of stating. But we are more efficient and we are more effective. We are more efficient because the Canadian health system delivers better health for only 10% of our GDP and provides full coverage, whereas the US spends well over 14% and leaves just about one in six not covered. The statistics from the US over the last several years show that 25% to 30% of their health costs go to administration plus profit, and I would say that most of it, unfortunately for them, is administration—it's not even profit—because a system of multiple payers becomes terribly difficult to run.

Health care costs have been rising at such a rate that they are now impacting the workplace. US workers generally were covered by their employers; however, the rising costs have forced some US employers to attempt to transfer health care costs to the employees. General Electric, a huge corporation that is an example of the modern corporation—they are number one or number two in the fields in which they compete, and therefore one could easily assume they have the number one or number two highest-paid and best-qualified workers in those fields—wants to transfer US\$1,200 per year to their workers. The last I heard, the workers were on strike.

There are some anecdotes. This is not as hard as the data and the information we mentioned to you earlier, but I have met over the last little while a few retired ex-employees from the same company, people I knew, superintendents and therefore well paid, and I asked them, "What are you doing here? You used to go to Florida." They say they can't afford the insurance that would cover the difference between the costs. I say if they can't afford it, then what happens to the rest?

#### 1140

Compared to the US, our Canadian system is efficient and effective, our costs are lower and everybody is covered. Infant mortality is lower, and life expectancy is higher. This gives us a tremendous economic advantage, and we want to make it better. So money invested in the public health system in Canada has been a great success economically. It has been a good investment, but we also want improvement.

One of the observations from the last few years is that demand exceeds supply. As in any industrial system, the health system cannot be an exception. When demand is greater than supply, costs rise, delays increase, service deteriorates, efficiency drops and some needs eventually will not be met regardless. Delays in the health system damage health. Delays are as inefficient in public health as in mining or driving around Toronto. We take delays—or we used to—in industry as a symptom of inadequate management, that the needs and abilities of management are mismanaged and therefore that needs attention.

Our governments argued about whose dollars they were for the last several years, and that is a delay we could have done without, because the problems are very real. We say, "Please stop and listen to us." We're telling you that in health care, time is people. Remove the delays and recover the inherent costs, and let's get on with improvements. We have to focus on the shortage of human and other resources.

Some of the delays are structural, and money alone won't fix them. We are short of trained family doctors, nurses, therapists, administrators and, on the evidence, project managers. We must take steps to correct the shortage, period. That's an essential move.

One of the problems you are confronting—and obviously you are confronting it on a larger scale than the rest of us—is that hospitals are now massive businesses. They have hundreds of millions of dollars in investment and they cost hundreds of millions of dollars to run. Those are complex businesses. I don't know how one understands billions of dollars to run, but those are the problems we have to contend with. There aren't enough people with the right experience, and we have to generate it. Governance also needs revamping so that the right skills mix is available on the boards.

From the point of view of the specific shortages, I believe the medical school of the north is one good way to get going on doctors, with the particular education that is needed. Nurses, too, ought to be available, if we can attract them with the right working conditions. We must

focus on correcting the shortages of doctors, nurses, technicians, administrators, project managers and governors, and the health budget should acknowledge the urgency of such needs.

One other issue you might consider is that given the disconnect between the number of doctors and the expenditures for health that has been proven over the last several years by the data, we might consider letting the students and the universities make the decisions as to the numbers. They are certainly faster than any government could possibly hope to be. They always have their ear to the ground.

There has been discussion about alternative finances, and I have some position on that one as well. Shifting health spending to the individual is the principle that has created the large management problems in the US. It has made it less effective, less efficient and less inclusive than ours. It has brought GE and its workers into conflict—not a good prospect. Increased life expectancy is really the ultimate measure of the return on investment in health issues. The fact that ours is higher and continues growing is a measure of Canada's competitiveness and is also an expression of who we are.

Taxes are the most economically efficient and equitable source of additional revenue for the health system. They carry the lowest collection and friction costs of the available alternatives, and practice shows they are economically sounder.

In a few words, we wish to retain and improve the health care system that we have, based on public funds, single-payer universal coverage, adequate human and physical resources, measurable and accountable, in co-operation with federal and provincial governments and balanced across the country.

One of the comments I would like to leave you with is that I participated years ago in an interprovincial education group. I can't remember the proper name, but the Ministers of Education were getting together. My experience from that was that very useful information was being transferred from one ministry to another and therefore enhancing everyone's benefit. This is perhaps something you might wish to consider.

We will know we have gotten there when our public health care system provides all Canadians with the standards that meet the needs of those Canadians who could afford something else. We need those Canadians to be happy with the public health system. We also need them to be happy with the public education system. But they are not fully satisfied, because they find deficiencies.

On a long flight, it is reassuring that the people who travel first class are relaxed and asleep and the pilots look relaxed, because then those in the economy class can also relax, secure in the knowledge that as long as they travel together, they will get to their destination safely.

We want our governments to protect and improve what we have: a society that is modern, effective, efficient and economically competitive. We know how we arrived at that. You heard this morning some of the

examples of how that is done. Those are decisions our government took 30 years ago.

Quality public education and quality public health care that satisfy the needs of all Canadians have moved Canada and Ontario into the ranks of the best places in which to live, and we want to remain there. The passengers in the front of the plane have become a little bit restless. So what we want to do is work and invest so that we can fix the deficiencies and improve things so we can all relax for the rest of the trip.

**The Chair:** Thank you. You've consumed all the available time. We appreciate your comments and your input. It leaves no time for questions. Thank you for being with us today.

Just a couple of announcements to the committee. There has been one change to the afternoon agenda. We have been successful in reaching the Sudbury and District Home Builders' Association, and Mr Del Bosco or his representative will be here at 1:40 in the cancellation slot. We have yet to hear back from the West Nipissing municipality as to whether they will be able to make it.

The departure will be from the hotel by bus at 4 o'clock. Bring your snowshoes. The flight is currently scheduled for 4:30, with tentative arrival in Thunder Bay at 6:45, if we don't need to have an emergency stopover in the Soo.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Good luck.

**The Chair:** Thanks, Rick.

The last announcement is that lunch for members and staff is in Fratelli's, upstairs.

We recess until 1 o'clock.

*The committee recessed from 1149 to 1301.*

**The Chair:** The committee on finance and economic affairs will come to order.

#### ONTARIO SCHOOL BUS ASSOCIATION

**The Chair:** Our first presenter this afternoon is the Ontario School Bus Association. Welcome.

**Mr Ron Malette:** Mr Chair, members of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, this morning, 800,000 children in communities across this province, from remote towns and villages in the far northwest to suburban centres in the greater Toronto area, boarded the familiar yellow and black school buses for the ride to school, a trip they will repeat once again in the afternoon, a trip that more than 1.5 million parents in Ontario expect will be safe, secure and on time. Simply put, the educational day for many Ontario students starts with us and ends with us. We are a small but very important partner in education.

However, after 50 years, Ontario's student transportation system is now at risk. I'd like to add that when I refer to the Ontario student transportation system, it begins with school board officials who plan bus routes, to the well-trained bus driver who carries over 200 children a day, to the school principal who is expected to enforce disciplinary problems under the Safe Schools Act, to the

company dispatcher who calms parents' calls on bad-weather days.

My name is Ron Malette. I am the president of the Ontario School Bus Association and owner of Tisdale School Bus Lines Ltd in South Porcupine. I was expecting to be joined today by Rick Donaldson, the executive director of the Ontario School Bus Association. However, due to flight and weather delays, he was not able to be with us.

Since the early 1990s, parents, school boards and the members of our industry, many of whom operate small businesses employing over 15,000 Ontarians, have told successive governments that the provincially funded student transportation system needs their immediate attention and leadership.

In 1997, six years ago last month, the OSBA released a detailed study by Ernst and Young identifying current and potential future problems in the student transportation system. That report went unheeded by government.

In 1998, the Ministry of Education established an expert committee comprised of government, industry, school board officials and parents. Acknowledging the current system was inequitable, the committee had one sole purpose: designing a new student transportation funding model.

In support of the committee, the ministry developed an options paper. However, many of the options were rejected, as they failed to meet the basic principles of fairness, equity and accountability. Notably, one of the rejected options was a student kilometre/linear density model currently used in Alberta.

Not to be discouraged, during the four years the expert committee has applied even greater diligence designing a funding distribution model that recognizes the principles of fairness, equity and accountability; incorporates recommendations of the Provincial Auditor; introduces new measurable parameters, including safety measures and a data-based, auditable costing analysis; demonstrates sensitivity to the vast and different geography; and recommends a phased-in approach within three years, beginning in 2002.

Last May, following the creation of the Education Equality Task Force chaired by Dr Mordechai Rozanski, the government encouraged our association to work with the task force, as its mandate included studying the student transportation policy development work, and we did. In our September submission to Dr Rozanski, we documented the unhealthy economic state of the school bus industry, referencing the 1997 Ernst and Young study and subsequent research.

The OSBA has stated repeatedly that Ontario's system needs fixing. However, Ontario does not need an Alberta fix, characterized by aging bus fleets and the inability to measure the true costs. Even more concerning, after four years of effort, including our commitment to work with Dr Rozanski, we were told the government would shelve the committee's work three weeks before Dr Rozanski's report was released. The government opted to start afresh

and study a student kilometre/linear density model, as in place in Alberta—the same model rejected four years earlier by its own expert committee.

When the Education Equality Task Force report was released, Dr Rozanski said: "I heard considerable support for the immediate implementation of a needs-based funding formula—that is, one that takes into account student needs instead of the existing historical allocation—and I agree that the issue is urgent. I am recommending that the Ministry of Education build on the extensive work already done by the transportation funding review committee and complete the development of a needs-based transportation grant as quickly as possible."

On the issue of the current funding for student transportation—\$631 million—Dr Rozanski pointed out that the general updating of cost benchmarks from 1997 to 2002 would result in \$80 million in additional funding. In other words, the system is underfunded today by over \$80 million, again proving the 1997 Ernst and Young report was right on.

With respect to the Education Equality Task Force report on the needs-based accountability and equity model, we ask the committee to recommend to the government that it scrap studying the student kilometre/linear density model and move immediately to complete the work of the past four and a half years on a made-in-Ontario model.

Why no to the student kilometre/linear density model? It takes Ontario's student transportation services backwards to what we had in the 1960s; it does not recognize the real cost to transport Ontario's students, suggesting that the government does not understand student transportation needs; it exacerbates existing regional funding disparities, creating further uncertainty in the system; it discredits four years of combined industry and government work to develop a made-in-Ontario model for student transportation services across the vast geography of this province; it may result in the overcrowding of our school buses, putting students at risk; and it was rejected by the expert committee in 1998.

As you would appreciate, our industry feels strongly about the issue. We should; we carry a precious cargo each and every day. Our industry has actively worked with the government since 1997. We have worked directly with three different Ministers of Education and Dr Rozanski's task force, and still there is no new funding model for student transportation.

Ontario's students and their parents deserve better. They deserve the right to know that Ontario's student transportation system is safe and will not be compromised by government inaction. Mr Chair, we solicit your help and the help of this committee to meet these expectations.

In summary, the OSBA urges the following: that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs recommend that the grant for student transportation for 2003-04 be \$711 million; second, that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs recommend

that the government accept Dr Rozanski's call to complete the work of the expert committee of the last four years as soon as possible; lastly, that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs recommend that until the new funding model is fully implemented across Ontario, the transportation grant be enveloped solely for student transportation.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir. That leaves us with almost three minutes each, and we begin with the NDP.

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you for your presentation. Good to see you again. Expand for me and help me understand a little better the kilometre/linear density model. Break it down a little bit for me.

**Mr Malette:** OK. What they do in the province of Alberta is measure every student from his home to the school the student attends and they base funding on total kilometres for the combined school board. How I perceive that is that if a student, say, in the GTA is three blocks from school, they're going to actually calibrate that student and include him in the funding model. So if they do funding on the linear model, it just doesn't seem to—kilometre is linear.

**Mr Christopherson:** And what do you experts in the field respond to that comment? I can understand why, if you wanted to be fair about a system—as you say, in the GTA it may not be anywhere near as long as it is, say, here in Sudbury—it might not give you a fair evaluation of the cost; I accept that. But this has obviously had a lot of attention, and there's obviously a counterpoint to that. What would it be?

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**Mr Malette:** I guess a cost-times-need basis would best suit the industry.

**Mr Christopherson:** Is that what is used mostly across the country, or not?

**Mr Malette:** I can't really answer what it is across the country. I know we've done a lot of work on it through our association, and that seems to be what would work best for the province of Ontario, in our opinion.

**Mr Christopherson:** I guess there's no point in asking whether the Americans have anything similar. I don't even know whether they're in the same kind of world in terms of calculations.

**Mr Malette:** We've been researching it. We haven't had a lot of hard data to analyze at this point.

**Mr Christopherson:** I remember the last time we had school buses come up. It was a few years ago. While you were reading, I was trying to remember what the issue was. There actually was some movement. It was either our government or the Tories just after us. It was the last time I saw this as a major issue in front of us.

**Mr Malette:** If I may, historically what has happened is that the province of Ontario transferred funds to the school boards, and school boards, with the financial restraints that they're encountering, will actually use some of the funds that were earmarked for transportation for program development, the JK program or other things that do actually have a lot of value in the classroom. It does little to assist our industry.

**Mr Christopherson:** We have it the other way around in Hamilton. They've underfunded transportation so much that the only way they can maintain the bare bones of the system is to actually rob from other areas. The other day we heard a presentation, and it was Mr Sampson, I think, who made the point and said, "We should have made them spend the money for guidance counsellors on this." That was it. That's the sort of thing where you don't want to get rid of a guidance counsellor, but if you don't have enough money to get the student from home to school, the guidance counsellor becomes rather a moot point. You've got to go back to your fundamentals; that is, we've got to get them to the school in a safe fashion.

I'm not sure about other boards, but I know that in Hamilton the funding cuts to transportation have necessitated the board taking money from other areas of education to put into maintaining at least a bare-bones transportation network.

Having said that, I would also say to you that no matter how you look at this, what perspective or how you carve this up, this is a huge issue. If the people who are operating the fleets are in any way cutting back on maintenance—not that I'm saying they're doing anything wrong, but if they aren't being as proactive as they'd like to be—then our kids aren't getting the safety that they could have, even if it's within guidelines, which I think is part of what your point is today.

**Mr Malette:** I don't think you'll ever find anybody in our industry who will jeopardize the safety of children.

**Mr Christopherson:** Agreed.

**Mr Malette:** That will never happen. We've had to take some drastic measures within our own operations, and it's always on the backs of the employees. Maybe it's unfair to go to your employees and ask them to subsidize the industry.

**Mr Christopherson:** Absolutely. I wish you well in the fight.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir. We move to the government.

**Mr Beaubien:** Thank you very much for your presentation this afternoon. I would have to agree with Mr Christopherson that it is a huge issue, because it is a large province and the demographics are certainly different in my part of the province than they are over here. I don't really think there is one solution to the problem. But I can recall, as a member of our community for nine years prior to the funding formula, the Lambton school board, which is now the Lambton Kent school board, running an old school bus fleet and having major difficulties. So when we say that the system is at risk now, I think it has been at risk probably for a number of years.

The solution to the problem is going to be difficult to find. There's no doubt about that, because I think we still have some school boards that do run their own fleets. We have the for-profits. The not-for-profit operators are having the same problems as the for-profit operators. I

don't know what the difference is. I've never been able to tell the difference between for-profit and not-for-profit.

You mention that you don't want to proceed with the Alberta solution, whereby you allocate on a per kilometre basis per student. What do you think would be a formula—like I said, I don't think you can use it province-wide—that would help you here in this particular area because of the cold and the long distances?

**Mr Malette:** Two points. I guess the first one is that I think that through the funding review committee, we were able to establish the actual cost of operating a school bus daily to and from school. What we need to do is justify the need, to quantify the amount of buses required out in the province of Ontario. I think that we have been able to do that through the funding review committee. The way I perceive it, maybe it's just too difficult a challenge for the ministry and its staff to try to go to boards that have been overfunded—not overfunded, but funded reasonably well over time—and ask them to reduce the transfer funds to those boards.

**Mr Arnott:** Following up on that, I guess you're suggesting that some school boards are receiving more funding than they actually need, if that's what you mean.

**Mr Malette:** That's very correct, yes.

**Mr Arnott:** And others are receiving considerably less than they need.

**Mr Malette:** That's correct.

**Mr Arnott:** I just want to say that I think your organization deserves credit for working with the government toward a solution and being prepared to sit down, roll up your sleeves and try to find a more fair, equitable and appropriate formula. I would hope that the government will in fact move forward with what you're asking for, and I'll certainly commit to you that I'll make sure that the Minister of Education is aware of your presentation today and the advice you've given us.

**Mr Malette:** I appreciate that.

**The Chair:** We move to the official opposition.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Ron, thank you for making the effort to get here. You should know that Ron came from Timmins last night. If you've ever driven Highway 144, you realize that it's one heck of a ride down. He's not sure whether he's going to be going back on Highway 144 or via North Bay because of the conditions of the road. I think this obviously reinforces the importance that he wants the committee to have when it comes to the funding of the transportation system in our school system, so I thank you for it.

The solution appears to me to be rather simple. You had an expert panel, correct?

**Mr Malette:** That's correct.

**Mr Bartolucci:** What were some of the recommendations of the expert panel?

**Mr Malette:** Actually, Dr Rozanski spoke to it quite clearly. He was saying that there needed to be an influx of \$80 million just to bring it to the level of 2002. We are now into 2003. That was also substantiated, as I said, by Ernst and Young. Our association has worked diligently with ministry staff. We've worked with three different

ministers. I think our plea to the ministry was there and they understood us loud and clear. I think it became a funding issue as to where they had to come up with the extra funds. I think it's critical that it be addressed very soon.

**Mr Bartolucci:** It is becoming a growing problem for this government as to how they're going to be able to fund things appropriately, not increase, because of their past practice.

I want you to expand a little bit on the transportation grant, the envelope solely for student transportation. How would that work?

**Mr Malette:** I think there's a very simple solution to our problem. Once they bring the level up to \$711 million, I feel that there are reasonable dollars in the system to fund our industry properly. The problem that we encounter is that a lot of the boards take the funds from the transportation section and use them for other departments. And I can appreciate that. Some are justified; at times I wonder if they are actually justified.

I deal with the board up in Timmins. They always want to work within budget, but in the budget there are always some discrepancies. We have a difficult time taking them to task on what the actual transportation allocation from the province is. From what I get off the Ministry of Education Web site on the transfer payments, disclosure is not always there; it's not as transparent as it should be.

**The Chair:** With the permission of the committee, could I ask Mr Malette a question?

**Mr O'Toole:** Yes, I think that's appropriate, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you. In the study that Mr Bartolucci is referring to, when you worked with the ministry and Dr Rozanski to determine the formula, it was determined that the linear/kilometre density model was not the one that you condoned. You wanted a funding system based on needs.

**Mr Malette:** Costs times needs, yes.

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**The Chair:** OK. And you're looking at \$711 million. I'm trying to understand what formula you would be using to determine those needs.

**Mr Malette:** Actually, with technology today, the Ministry of Education has allowed the boards the opportunity to buy software programs that will help them enhance the bus routes and give them an actual number at the end of the day as to how many buses they need to service a certain area.

**The Chair:** Would there be any determination as part of that process as to the distance? It varies from board to board where the students qualify for busing. There's no question in a rural environment, but in an urban environment, they pick anywhere from one kilometre to as much as two and a half kilometres in terms of the radius before they start busing the kids. Was there a discussion about that?

**Mr Malette:** In our study with the Ministry of Education and the funding review committee, we did

look at that. It becomes a bit of a political football field, if you will.

**The Chair:** With parents?

**Mr Malette:** Exactly. I'm compassionate with the ministry's problem, trying to deliver that to parents. We've got a broad geographic area in Ontario. Who is going to set the walking radiuses? It has to be a political decision, I would think. I think it has to come from the ministry that the walking radius will be whatever is reasonable.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Malette. We appreciate it. And I thank the committee for your indulgence. That concludes your time, sir.

#### SUDBURY AND DISTRICT HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

**The Chair:** Our next presenter, the Canadian Association of Not-for-Profit RESP Dealers, has cancelled. Fortunately, Mr Del Bosco, of the Sudbury and District Home Builders' Association, is here. Would you please come forward, sir. You agreed to move from 3:20 to now, so we appreciate your being here. Please state your name formally for the record. You have up to 20 minutes.

**Mr Terry Del Bosco:** I don't think I'll be taking the 20 minutes.

**The Chair:** Then get ready to answer a lot of questions.

**Mr Del Bosco:** My name is Terry Del Bosco, and I would like to thank you for asking me to come here. Today just didn't work out to be a good time for our association to be here. We currently have a training program going on for our builders, and it just so happens that our president, our vice-president and most of the building members of our association are attending this training seminar. So here I am.

I am the past president of the Sudbury and District Home Builders' Association. I've been involved in the residential construction industry for over 20 years now. I am president of Del Bosco Surveying, and my company works on projects throughout northern Ontario. I am involved in a wide variety of projects, ranging from seniors' complexes, highway re-alignment and residential subdivisions.

As with all members of our association, I am a volunteer. In addition to our businesses and personal responsibilities, we are dedicated to serving our industry.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you here today. You have already heard and received submissions from the Ontario Home Builders' Association and many other sister associations throughout Ontario, and I am sure I will be reiterating many of the points and recommendations that have already been made.

The Sudbury and District Home Builders' Association is the voice of residential construction in Sudbury, as the OHBA is throughout Ontario. Here we have over 60 members who contribute to improving the building environment in Sudbury, and our membership is made up of all disciplines involved in residential construction. It's

estimated that we produce approximately 80% of the new housing stock here in Sudbury, and we also renovate and maintain the houses.

We are continually working with other government organizations—for example, the city of greater Sudbury—to seek out and find ways of streamlining the building and development process. An example of this was the initiation and creation of the development liaison and advisory committee, known as DLAC, here in Sudbury. This committee was started by our association and includes professionals, trades and other subcontractors who participate in the building industry, along with many officials from the city of Sudbury. Together, we have made significant improvements to the building environment. We significantly cut down the time it takes to get a building permit, we streamlined the planning process, the re-zoning process, and the road widening implications that have come up. We've made great strides in working toward a better building environment.

Sudbury's housing market improved significantly in 2002. Starts last year were up by over 50% from the previous year. Our housing market is moving in a strong and healthy direction. Low mortgage rates, the immigration of professionals with high-paying jobs to Sudbury, along with job growth, have contributed to the strong sales in 2002. Statistics have also shown that the majority of new homes built here in Sudbury are large homes for professionals moving into the area.

We are looking forward to another healthy new-housing market again this year. We are predicting approximately a 20% to 30% increase in new home starts from last year. We believe this sends a positive message to our community.

We are confident that 2003 will be a good year for our industry. However, we do have some concerns that are a hindrance to growth. They are overregulation, development charges, skilled labour shortages, shortages in the availability of land and increasing material costs. To maintain Sudbury's and Ontario's healthy residential construction industry, these issues must be addressed.

Excessive regulation and overtaxation on the homebuilding industry have pushed the price of new homes higher and higher. This can put new home ownership out of the reach of many families. Statistics have shown that up to 30% of the cost of a new home can go toward fees such as taxes and development charges. This can equate to about \$30,000 on a \$150,000 home. Development charges represent a substantial portion of these fees.

This is a serious concern to us. It is suggested that some municipalities are manipulating development charges to increase revenue. Our association, along with the Ontario Home Builders' Association, is very concerned about this issue. These charges contribute significantly to the cost of housing in the province.

Our association, along with the Ontario Home Builders' Association, recommends that the government identify and correct the abuses of development charges in the homebuilding industry. We would further recommend

that you intervene to ensure that the intent of the legislation is upheld, and that is, to reduce costs.

Last year the government announced its intention to offer opportunity bonds tax-free to investors. We support this move. The bonds are a fair and proactive method of financing the expansion of municipal infrastructure, rather than development charges. Extending the tax exemption status of these bonds to include federal taxes will also increase their attractiveness to potential investors.

Transportation is also key to marketing and developing our area. Recent announcements to improve Highway 69 are a step in the right direction. Currently, the provincial government collects taxes on fuel which are not allocated to a specific purpose but simply placed in general revenue. We are recommending that a percentage of the current fuel tax be directed to building, servicing and maintaining roads. Mass transit is not as much of an issue in our area as it is in southern Ontario; however, consideration should be given to other forms of transportation in the north, such as rail and air.

The shortage of skilled labour is a major concern for the construction industry. This has been a concern of our local association for a number of years. In 1991, we sat on a committee that examined market trends and training needs for the districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin. Our results were the same as other studies conducted throughout Ontario.

The number of young people entering the industry is not offsetting the increasing number of retirees. We must inform and educate our young people about the opportunities available in the construction industry. We must promote skilled trades to our young people, in our schools and in the media. We believe that the government should increase funding for shop facilities and promote co-op programs in our schools. I have personally been involved with the co-op program and can attest to its success.

### 1330

Shortages in the availability of serviced land have been an issue in Sudbury for a number of years. Studies have been conducted looking at our water supply and sewage system. There has been some effort made to improve our infrastructure, but we believe this is not enough. We have to look to the future. Problems still exist with our water supply, and we currently have a sewage system that is near or at its maximum capacity. We don't believe this is unique to our community. We are recommending that the government look further into helping fund projects that will enhance our infrastructure.

Rental housing is becoming in short supply in several urban areas throughout Ontario. This is starting to happen now in Sudbury. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp indicates a shortage of about 14,000 new rental units per year over the next 15 years in Ontario. We are recommending the lowering or elimination of development charges on rental units. The government is encouraged to promote policies for private investment in this sector and

to continue the \$2,000 per unit PST program. Adequate shelter is a basic necessity for all Ontario citizens.

Pressure from the underground economy continues to plague our industry, particularly in the renovation sector. On the provincial level, it is estimated that between \$1.1 billion to \$1.7 billion per year is lost in tax revenue to the underground economy. It is a known fact that health and safety standards are lower in the underground economy. We recommend that the government work together with industry to promote the skills and services of registered and legitimate renovators and contractors to the public.

Our association compliments the move of the government in 2000 to make the land transfer tax rebate for first-time new home buyers permanent. It is estimated that since its introduction in 1996, rebates totalling approximately \$180 million have helped more than 126,000 Ontarians purchase their first home. This has certainly contributed to the solid growth experienced in the new housing market.

A survey of our members showed that priorities for the provincial government should be as follows: some income tax cuts, more support for small business, spending cuts, improved infrastructure and new rental construction. We realize it is a difficult balance, but we support the fiscal policy of the government to continue in the direction of spending cuts and tax cuts.

I would like to thank you for your attention and interest in our presentation. We have always been actively involved in the consultation process, and we look forward to helping develop a strategy for promoting and managing growth in a way that sustains a strong economy.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Del Bosco. That leaves us with two minutes per caucus, beginning with the government.

**Mr O'Toole:** It's very important to hear from one of the more important sectors in the economy. We've heard repeatedly from economists and other sector leaders in our presentations about the importance of the home construction and commercial construction sectors to the economy, also repeating a lot of the factors that justify that. They're worth repeating again: low competitive interest rates are extremely important, also the job growth and multiplier effect. It's evident that some of our policies have been successful—not just to toot our own government horn. We operate from the premise of creating a strong economy, of which you're an important part, and part of that is being tax-competitive in a number of the ways you've mentioned, I might say as well.

On the housing issue, we do hear and have heard, and probably will hear from the opposition, that there's more to be done to make housing affordable and yet fair and accessible to everyone of modest means. I think the PST and the land transfer tax have been successful programs, and I appreciate that.

**The Chair:** Question, sir?

**Mr O'Toole:** We also heard from Cambrian College with respect to skilled trades. Are there other mechanisms whereby we could eliminate some of the barriers,

not just the development charges—that's a complicated issue; I think it has been talked about since the Liberals introduced it. Are there other things we could do to make housing more affordable, to eliminate the red tape and yet have safe, reliable, affordable housing?

**Mr Del Bosco:** I think that's a difficult question to answer. Everything is always cost driven. No matter how hard you try to do it, things are cost driven, and the incentives like the PST rebate for first-time homebuyers are definitely things that are going in the right direction.

I know that here in Sudbury we experience a lot of, if I can use the words, red tape when we're going through council or going through the planning department. Those things seem to almost deter people from developing at times, and the amount of time spent on that ends up on the bottom line of the cost of a project. I realize it's in a lower level of government, but I'm sure that if we start from the top and work down, and start from the bottom and work up, somewhere in between, things are going to come together and make the building environment more streamlined. If it's more streamlined, less time is less money.

**The Chair:** We move to the official opposition.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Terry, thanks very much for a very good presentation, a very interesting presentation and a presentation that certainly will evoke more thinking and also provide the government with some suggestions.

I'd like you to outline to the government members in particular what their centralization of services did to your association across northern Ontario. You will know that from 1995 on, there was a centralization of services and, to be fair to the government, 6,282 jobs—no more, but no less—were lost in the north.

**Mr Del Bosco:** We definitely lost members. If we take a look at housing starts—1996 was the year you used—from 1996, housing starts went in only one direction and that was basically straight down. I believe it was in 1992 or 1991 that we had 1,500 housing starts in Sudbury. By the time 1998 rolled around, we were down to 200. From 1998 to today, we have started to move back in the right direction. But the centralization definitely hurt our economy. We have a hard time attracting people here—doctors are hard to attract. Once they get here, though, they don't want to leave, because we do have a great place to live.

**Mr Beaubien:** Good housing stock.

**Mr Del Bosco:** Yes. We have a great place to live.

**The Chair:** We move to the third party.

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you for your presentation. It's very enlightening. Certainly what's happening here is similar to what's happening elsewhere across the province, with some local differences.

Just a little bit on development charges and lot levies; I don't want to leave this subject without making sure we have identified the other side of this, the other pressure that's on there, and that of course is the municipalities. After the home builders have built the homes and the people have moved in and you have moved on to a new development area, of course the city is left with having to

make sure there are enough schools in the area, enough libraries, recreation centres, green space, parklands that have to be maintained and other things that make it worth living in that particular area. Whatever part of the cost is not covered by development charges—meaning the people who are moving in there who are driving the need for a new school, a new library or a new rec centre—means that somebody who bought their house 10 years ago is going to have to pay a little extra in taxes to build a recreation centre in somebody else's part of the city.

I just wanted to point out that there is the competing pressure. You mentioned it's complex, and that's one of the complexities. The higher it is, certainly the less profit. But in most cases, really what happens is that it gets added to the bottom line and the homebuyer pays more—agreed. On the other hand, those municipal services have to be provided, and if they aren't provided by those who are moving into the homes and are going to use them, then someone else, usually in the older part of the city, is going to have to pay somebody else's freight. That's the competing interest. Have you any thoughts or comments on that side of the equation?

**1340**

**Mr Del Bosco:** I have to agree with you there. However, when we started to experience a decline in housing starts here in Sudbury, our development charges were going up, and we had to work extremely hard to convince the city officials that you can't be charging more when the scale is going the other way. We successfully petitioned our city council to reduce development charges, and it was a large demonstration that we had to put on. Rick will attest that we probably had 1,000 or 1,500 people at Civic Square, with transports circling Civic Square, telling our local officials they couldn't go in that direction.

You were talking about parkland and those sorts of issues. Typically, when a subdivision is developed, those issues are addressed by the council at city hall in the draft subdivision agreement. Parkland is dealt with; parks are dealt with. Schooling and libraries are tough issues, because they depend on the type of people who move into a neighbourhood. If you have all seniors moving into an area—if it is developed as a seniors' complex—maybe a school isn't as big an issue.

**Mr Christopherson:** But more lighting and security might be.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, gentlemen. And thank you for accommodating us and moving forward the time to do your presentation. We appreciate your presence here.

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF  
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS  
AND AUDIOLOGISTS

**The Chair:** Our next group is the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists. I heard that my long-time friend Fiona hasn't been able to make it.



**Ms Joanne Querney:** Despite her best efforts.

**The Chair:** We ask that you be kind enough to state your name for the record. You have 20 minutes, and if there's time left over, we'll have questions. Welcome.

**Ms Querney:** Thank you for having our association here today. Fiona, despite spending the last 24 hours either at the Toronto airport or circling above Sudbury, was not able to land. In her place, I am Joanne Querney. I'm an audiologist in Sudbury. My colleague Mary Ann Peloso, who is a speech-language pathologist, will be sharing some thoughts with you about the delivery of speech-language pathology and audiology services in Ontario.

On behalf of OSLA, we appreciate the opportunity to participate in the 2003 Ontario pre-budget consultation process, and we welcome this chance to provide you, and ultimately the Minister of Finance, with our input on Ontario's economic policy direction, particularly in regard to improving access and quality of care for Ontarians who require the services of audiologists and speech-language pathologists.

Our presentation today covers three main areas. First, it provides some background on OSLA and the important role our members play in Ontario's health care and education systems. Second, it calls for some measures to ensure patient access, quality of care and cost-effective delivery of audiology services in Ontario. Finally, we would like to request assistance from the government to help resolve service and delivery issues for speech-language pathologists across Ontario. At the end of our remarks, we would be pleased to answer any questions you have.

To give you a little background, OSLA is the professional association representing speech-language pathologists and audiologists in our province. Both are included as separate and distinct professions under the Regulated Health Professions Act. As autonomous professions with master's and doctoral degree levels of education, we have comprehensive scopes of practice enshrined in the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act, 1991. OSLA represents over 1,650 members, including 290 audiologists, 1,365 speech-language pathologists and student members from both professions. Our objective is to promote the interests of OSLA members through a range of supportive services and advocacy activities.

Currently, one in 10 Ontarians require the services of either an audiologist or a speech-language pathologist to assist with speech, language, swallowing or hearing difficulties. Audiologists and speech-language pathologists often collaborate with other regulated providers, including physicians, nurses, dietitians, teachers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers and psychologists, to provide optimum care and treatment to individuals with communication, swallowing or hearing problems. There's more detail about the specific services of audiologists and speech-language pathologists in your package.

I'd like to turn now to the delivery of audiology services in Ontario. OSLA has been working with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for at least 20 years to revise existing regulations under OHIP to create an efficient, high-quality system for delivering audiology services to Ontarians. In August 2001, changes, additional regulations and a total delisting of some services entrenched a flawed system for delivery of diagnostic hearing tests in Ontario through funding contained in the physicians' schedule of benefits. This has resulted in diminished quality of care, reduced patient access to audiological services and, of important significance, greater and unnecessary health care costs for the Ontario government. Moreover, these changes open the door to funding services provided by unregulated persons. It makes sense that direct access to regulated health professionals with expertise specific to patient needs avoids unnecessary duplication and inconvenience to the consumer, and cost to the system. It follows, then, that Ontarians should have direct access to audiologists without delays.

Our solutions: in July 2002, OSLA submitted a proposal—indeed, our second in three years—to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that would address the consumers' need for accessible, quality services while meeting the ministry's budgetary constraints. Our solution would result in an estimated saving of up to \$170 per patient encounter and would minimize duplication and remove unnecessary burdens on physicians' time. It involves funding audiology services directly, outside of the physicians' schedule of benefits, through such defined routes as alternative payment plans to audiology practices and institutional global budgets.

As the Ontario government reviews policy options for better managing health care expenditures, we suggest that the proposal set forward by OSLA be considered for implementation and that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care work with OSLA to reinstate constructive discussions regarding predictable, viable funding alternatives for audiologic services in Ontario that would ensure a cost-effective delivery model and appropriate utilization of services, restore equitable and timely access to audiologic care, resolve quality-of-care issues and resolve constraints on audiologists' scope of practice.

OSLA commends the government for introducing the leading-edge infant hearing program and recommends that this program be maintained and enhanced. It is a wonderful program, and we are very grateful for it.

I'm now going to turn the microphone over to Mary Ann Peloso, who will be discussing some speech pathology issues.

**Ms Mary Ann Peloso:** I'll be discussing the services and delivery issues for speech-language pathologists across Ontario.

First, I'll address the supply and demand issues for speech-language pathologists. OSLA has researched this area and has published our findings in two documents. These findings confirm that ratios of speech-language pathologists to the population fall short of meeting demo-

graphic demands, and projections for the future indicate there will be increased needs for these professionals.

The immediate effects of the shortage of qualified speech-language pathologists include delays, constraints and gaps in services, increased demand, and inherent costs and challenges in retaining staff, filling vacancies, and recruitment efforts.

The Ministry of Health has discussed this important issue with OSLA but has indicated that there is no mandate to find appropriate solutions at this time. I should mention that our first report includes information about audiologists, but the crisis in that sector, as Joanne has already discussed, must be resolved before we can fully appreciate supply and demand issues for audiologists.

Our solutions: OSLA proposes that the government earmark funds for increasing university enrolment in speech-language pathology programs. OSLA also recommends that the government work with our association to develop strategies to repatriate Canadian students from US programs upon graduation and increase financial incentives to attract professionals from other jurisdictions with an adequate supply of speech-language pathology professionals. Along the same line, OSLA could also work with the ministry and the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario to develop strategies to fast-track credentialing of professionals who meet the high standards of the profession in Ontario but have been trained in other countries.

#### 1350

Now I'd like to talk about providing services in Ontario's schools. For over two decades, OSLA has been actively working in partnership with the Ontario government to provide input and recommendations regarding provision of speech and language services in Ontario schools. While OSLA has enjoyed many opportunities to work with the Ontario government on a variety of school services initiatives, our concerns include ensuring the provision of responsive, effective, accountable speech-language services throughout the school years; ensuring that services for school-age children are coordinated by speech-language pathologists working in education; and ensuring adequate funding for children with speech and language needs.

Our solutions: OSLA is committed to continuing to work with the government on initiatives to assist school-age children. We request continued opportunities to provide input on any initiatives that involve oral language and communication needs of school-age children, including curriculum, program standards and coordinated services.

In addition, OSLA promotes availability of a comprehensive system of communication services for school-age children which should be coordinated through school boards. We request that the government of Ontario review OSLA's Position on Speech and Language Services for School Age Children, written in 1999, and implement the recommended proposals.

OSLA recommends ongoing attention to the formulae used in funding school boards, taking our recom-

mendations into consideration, so that the needs of students with communication difficulties can be adequately addressed. These recommendations are included in our document OSLA's Response to the Education Equality Task Force Discussion Paper on Student-Focused Funding.

Lastly, I will speak about providing health care speech-language pathology services. OSLA has concerns about budgetary constraints that have created barriers to meeting the needs of Ontarians who require the services of speech-language pathologists in health care settings. The funding freeze for community care access centres, or CCACs, has restricted adequate provision of in-home and school-health speech and language services coordinated by these agencies. In addition, due to wait lists for services and changes to admission and discharge criteria, timely access continues to be a concern, particularly in situations where intervention is postponed until clients become high-priority or high-risk. While this saves short-term costs, long-term costs for the system increase. At the same time, we have been aware of numerous reductions, closures and gaps in services for outpatient adults requiring speech-language pathology services. We are in the process of inputting and analyzing data collected from organizations across Ontario.

Our solutions: OSLA recommends the government maintain and enhance funding to the preschool speech and language programs that have successfully rolled out across Ontario and also to children's treatment centres. OSLA also recommends restoring funding to CCACs as well as providing additional funding to address growth in order to restore access to and sufficiency of these speech-language pathology services. OSLA also requests the government ensure funding to hospitals and rehabilitation centres to enable them to maintain and enhance existing programs and to restore programs that have been reduced or eliminated.

In summary, OSLA is an organization committed to working with the government to ensure the most efficient, cost-effective and sustainable means of providing audiology and speech-language pathology services to Ontarians. OSLA believes the 2003 Ontario budget provides the government with an opportunity to consider input equally from a range of stakeholders, to set aside stakeholder beliefs about ownership of the funds, and to demonstrate fiscal responsibility without compromising its commitment to primary health care in Ontario. There is potential for substantial long-term benefits and savings to the system through direct and sufficient access to speech-language pathologists and audiologists. Their timely interventions can create savings by ensuring individuals of all ages, from infants to the elderly, can develop and participate to their full potential. Substantial long-term costs can be averted in the health, education, disability support, unemployment and mental health sectors and even in the correctional system. OSLA has endorsed a fully interdisciplinary model of primary care as one approach to ensuring timely and direct access to our professions as primary care providers.

We urge the government to adopt these solutions:

(1) Commit to reinstating constructive discussions regarding predictable funding alternatives for audiological services, earmarking funds to implement the proposals put forward by OSLA in July 2002 that would meet the consumers' need for accessible, quality audiology services while meeting the ministry's budgetary constraints.

(2) Consider OSLA's recommendations regarding appropriate funding and accountability standards to meet the communication needs of school-age children.

(3) Address funding constraints that have reduced or eliminated health care speech-language pathology services in hospitals and the community, and maintain and enhance successful early intervention speech-language and hearing initiatives.

(4) Adopt measures to ensure an adequate supply of speech-language pathologists to meet the needs of Ontarians.

(5) Ensure that primary care initiatives embrace a fully comprehensive multidisciplinary team that enables direct, cost-effective access to the right provider in the right place at the right time.

(6) Develop a process for obtaining input from all regulated health professionals before decisions on spending cuts are made.

In committing to these solutions, OSLA is confident that the government of Ontario will enhance the quality of health care in Ontario and ensure the sustainability of government expenditures in the area of audiology and speech-language pathology services.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our input to this process. We'd be happy to answer any questions.

**The Chair:** There's about 30 seconds for each caucus to ask a question. We'll begin with the Liberal Party.

**Mr Bartolucci:** A very, very fast question: Joanne, the government made changes in August 2001 to save money to provide greater access of service etc, and for higher-trained professionals to be dealing with the general public. Have any of those been successful, with those changes?

**Ms Querney:** I believe the government has stated that the purpose of the changes in the OHIP billing situation was strictly to control costs; they were not to effect other changes.

Certainly, what has happened with billing for audiology in Ontario is that the system for funding audiology has been through OHIP, because when that was instituted a number of years back, there really was not audiology as a profession. As the profession has grown, that archaic model continues to be used to fund a service that is not physician-provided. General practice physicians have no training in audiology. Ear, nose and throat surgeons have a maximum of two weeks of training in audiology. As an audiologist, I require a minimum of seven years of university training, and many of us have or are working toward doctoral degrees, which is 10 years of university training. You can do the math and see there's a huge difference.

Physicians are trained—ear, nose and throat physicians in particular—to be ear, nose and throat surgeons, not audiologists. Our funding model has not kept up with that. It has forced us into poor practice patterns, and there is no funding available for audiology directly as a profession. That model, those changes, have not met the needs.

**The Chair:** We move to the NDP.

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you for your presentation. I'm interested in what happened—on pages 4 and 5. In July 2000, the government brought in a regulation that corrected things for you, that—oh, wait, that created a problem. That regulation was overturned in August 2001, but they went back—I'm on the top of page 5.

**1400**

**Ms Querney:** Sorry, I don't have that document. Can you tell me what the regulation is? I'd be happy to speak about it.

**Mr Christopherson:** Sure. A "regulation implemented on July 1 ... stipulated DHTs delegated by physicians would only be reimbursed if performed by audiologists."

**Ms Querney:** Yes, I know what you're speaking of.

**Mr Christopherson:** "This regulation, however, was not only overturned in August 2001, but at that time the government also took the opportunity to further entrench the flawed system by committing to enforcement of"—

**The Chair:** The question?

**Mr Christopherson:** —and they added restrictions which caused more problems. You're saying here that some of these opened the door to funding services being provided by unregulated persons.

**Ms Querney:** Absolutely. Your mother can provide a hearing test in Ontario. The government did recognize that there were problems with unregulated people providing hearing testing. The prescription of a hearing aid is a controlled act; assessment of hearing is not. Anybody can hang up a shingle and test hearing.

The government, in its recognition that that was not acceptable, did insert a preamble to OHIP that said the government would only spend public dollars on hearing testing when it was provided by a qualified practitioner, which they defined as an audiologist or a physician.

Subsequent to advocacy through some of the physician committees, through the combined OHIP-OMA committee, the PSC, and some of the recommendations that have come about thereafter, the government rescinded that and then again said, "No, anybody can actually do a hearing test." They did retract that statement.

**Mr Christopherson:** It was broken, they fixed it and they broke it again.

**The Chair:** We move to the government side.

**Mr O'Toole:** I've met with the audiologists in my area. I am PA to the Minister of Health and am very familiar with the issue. I believe you're right: there are certain resource issues. The OHIP negotiations are going on now. You're right about that \$170 billing fee; it's duplicative and non-productive. We've got to find out

how to get you directly on it. Your profession has to continue to push and legitimize—everybody is up to standard and all those kinds of things.

**The Chair:** Question, please.

**Mr O'Toole:** The second part is on speech and language. My sister was in that profession for a number of years in education. When we introduced improvements to speech and language as part of the early childhood thing and put funding in, we found there weren't enough people to deliver it.

**The Chair:** Question, please.

**Mr O'Toole:** I guess my thing is that when the CCACs started to deliver it, they couldn't do it in the school because of some kind of workplace issue. How can we fix that problem where you, as a trained speech and language person, go into the school and can't do the job in the school?

**The Chair:** Answer, please, one of you.

**Ms Peloso:** One of the problems when they did that Bill 81 way back—I think that's what you're referring to—when Health took over some of the responsibilities of providing speech and language pathology services in the school so children didn't have to miss school to go out for appointments in hospitals and whatnot, it became a bit flawed when they tried to divide speech problems into organic and non-organic, or medically based versus non-medically based. But there is such an overlap between some of the speech problems and language and curriculum that that has muddied the waters with people coming in from CCAC agencies to provide some of the speech services in the schools and school board speech pathologists trying to provide the other services in the schools and differentiating between. So a CCAC speech pathologist would come in and work on a child with their articulation problems and another speech pathologist would come in and help that same child with their language problems because the CCAC professional isn't supposed to work on language. Those are some of the issues that are causing some concerns.

**The Chair:** That concludes your time. We appreciate your presentation and your challenge in trying to answer the questions. Thank you very much.

#### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH ONTARIO

**The Chair:** Our next presenter is here and has kindly consented to appear earlier than their scheduled time: the Children's Mental Health Ontario organization. If you would please step forward and give us your name for the purpose of Hansard. You have up to 20 minutes. Any time left over we'll use for questions. Welcome.

**Ms Susan Nicholson:** Susan Nicholson. I'm with the Child and Family Centre, and I'm representing Children's Mental Health Ontario.

Good mental health enables us to think clearly, feel confident and act purposefully as we face life's challenges. Like physical health, mental health is crucial at every stage in life.

Mental health problems in children and youth can occur in any family, in any community. These problems are devastating to families and costly to communities and the health care system. They can lead to school failure, family conflicts, drug abuse, violence or suicide.

Many of today's headline problems in children and youth—violence, bullying, suicide—are the result of mental health problems that have not been recognized. Early symptoms such as acting out, aggression, inability to concentrate, withdrawal or unrealistic fears are often seen as transient and go untreated. But children and youth with mental health problems need professional care from experts in this field. The good news is that when the right services are available, children's mental health problems can often be successfully treated, preventing more serious problems and more costly difficulties later in life.

According to the Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 18% of children and youth in Ontario have a diagnosable mental health disorder, virtually the same rate of incidence as in adults. But a growing number of experts across North America are seeing increases in rates of emotional and behavioural illnesses in children. In Ontario, children's mental health professionals are saying that the incidence of mental health problems in children is reaching epidemic proportions. Every day, children show up in hospital emergency rooms or in the offices of mental health professionals, debilitated by depression and overwhelmed by anxiety. An intake worker at a children's mental health centre said recently, "We handle crises immediately, but we don't have services for the other children and families on our waiting lists."

Community-based children's mental health centres in Ontario have seen a 50% increase in waiting lists over the last year, rising from 8,000 to 12,000 children and families. We know that some of that increase can be attributed to a rising incidence of mental health problems. Another major factor in the increased number of people on the waiting list is the shortage of staff caused by inadequate funding. In addition, new policies affecting schools and children's aid societies have resulted in vastly increased numbers of referrals to children's mental health centres.

Roy Romanow, head of the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, recently delivered his blueprint for revamping health care. His report acknowledged that mental health has often been an "orphaned or forgotten" program. Since 1993, the Ontario government's investment in core funding for children's mental health services has not only failed to keep pace with costs but has actually declined. In a typical children's mental health centre, a social worker with specialized training in children's mental health earns between 24% and 36% less than a comparable staff person in children's aid societies, hospitals and boards of education.

In 2000, the Ontario government invested \$20 million in a four-point plan targeted primarily to intensive services and crisis intervention. More recently, government invested an additional \$6.9 million for much-needed

mental health services for children under the age of seven. These are excellent investments and have resulted in more services for children. Meeting the objectives of these programs, however, has added to the already untenable pressure on the basic infrastructure that supports all children's mental health services.

Staff turnover in recent years has been as high as 40% in some centres, over 25% in many. The inability to recruit and keep skilled front-line staff and managers has led to a reduction in the services available to families. It has also resulted in tremendous waste of valuable knowledge and experience and a waste of the resources we spend on training as new staff need to be trained and retrained to replace those leaving for better-paying positions.

The biggest impact is on the children and families we serve. The high turnover rate means that children have two to three different workers during their treatment, and sometimes even more. Because of the nature of their illness, children with mental health problems have difficulty forging and maintaining relationships. A trusting relationship with a mental health worker, consistent over time, is often the key to their recovery. Lack of such consistency, caused by high rates of turnover, stresses the children and their families, impedes treatment progress, and increases the risks of recurrence or escalation of mental health problems.

Children's mental health infrastructure is being stretched too thin. We need a revitalization program if we are to hire, train and retain competent staff to provide the essential support to children with mental health needs.

**1410**

For some time now, we have been asking for \$50 million to stabilize and revitalize treatment programs across Ontario for children with mental health problems and their families. These funds would, most importantly, reduce the risk of long-term complications for many children with emotional and behavioural illnesses and provide relief to their families. The funding would be viewed by the sector as a major investment and an acknowledgement of the importance of children's mental health services.

We have met with many MPPs and government staff to discuss this issue and make the case for the \$50 million. Feedback has been favourable and the request is scheduled to go before Management Board soon, but we still don't have an answer. The need is urgent and growing for stable funding and planned increases in the foreseeable future in the children's mental health sector.

It is important that all children with mental health problems have access to the supports and treatment they need, as our provincial agency has advocated. Salary and staffing issues are one of our major concerns. As well, our northern communities have some very unique needs in terms of geographical distance and scarcity of resources. Our centre and our colleagues throughout the north are often the only support service to low-income families in need. We are the only resource they can

afford to call upon at a very vulnerable and difficult moment in their lives.

We are therefore asking you to bring this message to your colleagues at Queen's Park and to advocate for revitalization of children's mental health centres throughout this province by providing immediate and stable funding to meet the needs of these children and their families.

**The Chair:** Thanks, Ms Nicholson. That leaves us with about two and a half minutes per caucus.

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you for your presentation. I was quite struck by the fact that you make the very strong statement—and when it comes from a professional like yourself, it carries a lot of weight—on page 2, “In Ontario, children's mental health professionals are saying that the incidence of mental health problems in children is reaching epidemic proportions.” You then go on to say, “Community-based children's mental health centres in Ontario have seen a 50% increase in waiting lists over the last year....” You identify one of the major factors as the shortage of staff caused by inadequate funding. Then, down at the bottom of the page, you expand on that: “In a typical children's mental health centre, a social worker with specialized training in children's mental health earns between 24% and 36% less than a comparable staff person in children's aid societies, hospitals and boards of education.”

You need to know that it drives Mr O'Toole absolutely crazy when he sees government announcements of new money and a large portion of that goes to staff. In his mind, I suppose that somehow that's not achieving the goal, and I'm thinking specifically of schools. He mentioned this about education: he wanted to see books bought and computers and hard assets, and left the impression, in my opinion, that money toward wages was thrown out the window, that it wasn't the same as money spent on real things for education.

I wonder if you could again expand on the damage; how not having enough money to pay people an adequate rate of pay translates into poor or non-existent services for, in this case, children, and how important it is for you to have the ability to pay people to attract enough and of the calibre that these services require.

**Ms Nicholson:** I'd like to speak to the north and specifically our problem in Sudbury. We provide services in the francophone sector and the aboriginal sector. To be able to attract those specialized individuals—typically, an agency such as ours is looking for individuals with a master's degree in social work to provide the proper training. We cannot compete with our counterparts. In other words, we're not able to attract those people. You have to realize that the service we provide is really people-oriented. Sure, we can provide the books, but it's the counselling, it's the face-to-face sessions and the qualified staff that really impact on the service delivery to those children and their families.

**Mr Beaubien:** Thank you very much for your presentation. I want to follow up on Mr Christopherson's point, maybe from a different perspective. We can talk

about salaries, shortage of staff, the lack of money and the turnover of staff, but I think there's something more serious happening with young people. We can talk about mental health, but I think we can also look at the physical health. There are all kinds of programs for obesity, smoking and drugs. There's a general malaise with young people. What's going on there? As a family, we raised three young children; they're adults now. But what's going on?

**Mr O'Toole:** What's happening?

**Mr Beaubien:** Yes, what's happening?

**Mr O'Toole:** We have five kids.

**Ms Nicholson:** I have two myself.

**Mr Beaubien:** What's happening in the north here, in Sudbury?

**Ms Nicholson:** Cases that we're seeing now have escalated from what we were seeing five years ago.

**Mr Beaubien:** Why?

**Ms Nicholson:** Society, lack of programs in the schools perhaps.

**Mr Beaubien:** What about parental responsibility, individual responsibility, lifestyle?

**Ms Nicholson:** A lot of what we do in mental health agencies is also to help the parents, trying to teach the parents to cope and train them in how to deal with these pressures and how to deal with the behaviour problems exhibited by their children. That's part of what we do as a mental health agency.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Thanks very much, Susan, for an excellent presentation. Certainly, being a parent at one of my schools, you were a wonderful individual when it came to co-operation and when it came to enhancing the quality of the school. You're doing that now in a very new way but under very difficult situations. Let me tell you, in answer to Mr Beaubien's question, that a lack of resources would probably be one of the predominant reasons we're seeing an increase.

You mentioned in your mandate that prevention and early intervention services are very important. Explain to the committee how that's changed over the course of the last seven years. Has funding decreased, has opportunity for programs been enhanced or decreased, and what type of difference would that make to the mental well-being of the people you serve?

**Ms Nicholson:** Over the last four years, we've had a change in the Making Services Work for People mandate by the ministry, and the focus has been on the essential cases. In other words, what we primarily are focusing on are the hard-to-serve cases, and these are latency-aged children, so they're already exhibiting these major behaviour and aggression problems.

If we had the funding to be able to provide the prevention programs to stop that—granted, we do have the zero to 6 mental health in the early years and of course that goes a long way to helping those. But from a mental health perspective, to be able to have those intensive programs at the early stage would actually go a long way to preventing those cases from becoming extreme cases where these kids end up in the young

offender facilities and costing us \$100,000 a year. When you compare that to the cost of providing mental health services, which run an average of \$2,000 to \$3,000 per child per year, I think that's an effective way of managing those problems. I don't know if I've answered your question.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Absolutely.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms Nicholson. We appreciate your input today.

#### CRASH 69

**The Chair:** Our next group is CRASH 69. While Mr Lougheed is coming forward, Rick, is your next project going to be CRASH 144?

**Mr Bartolucci:** It all depends on how CRASH 69 goes.

**The Chair:** Please state your name clearly for the record, sir.

**Mr Gerry Lougheed Jr:** My name is Gerry Lougheed Jr. I am the co-chair of the CRASH 69 committee, which stands for Community Rallying Against Substandard Highway 69. Our committee is co-chaired by Dr Gary Bota, a well-respected emergency physician and former director of the trauma unit at the Sudbury Regional Hospital. Committee members include local business and labour leaders and area residents who have suffered the loss of a family member on the highway.

#### 1420

I would like to thank your committee for including CRASH 69 as a presenter today. We believe the upcoming budget is a crucial document to provide a credible funding envelope to improve Highway 69 or to prove the old proverb that the road to hell is paved with good intentions, and we know the hellish highway is called Highway 69.

This afternoon I would like to provide you with a brief history of the issues concerning Highway 69 and our recommendations for your budget deliberations. As people who have successfully sought public office, I hazard a guess that, regardless of your political stripe, your initial and hopefully ongoing motivation to be an MPP was your desire to help others, to provide leadership that improves the quality of life in your riding and to make a difference in a good and positive way.

In Sudbury, we are fortunate to have a leader with those qualities in the person of Rick Bartolucci, who started to lobby for a four-lane Highway 69 in 1979 when he served as an area councillor. He knew that Highway 69 is the umbilical cord between northern and southern Ontario. He knew that to develop northern industry and businesses, a safer, more efficient highway had to be built. When he was elected as MPP in 1995, he continued his efforts in lobbying the government on this issue, soliciting over 14,000 postcards from Sudbury in his "Highway 69 Worth the Investment" campaign, again emphasizing the need for a road which encourages economic investments. Last year, Mr Bartolucci secured the support of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce,

representing 56,000 members through 156 chambers and boards of trade, in the campaign to widen the road because it makes good economic sense. In his research, he was able to document that Highway 69 is an antiquated highway which Bill Davis's government in 1974 knew needed attention.

Highway 69 was built over 40 years ago, when recreational traffic was much lighter and when most goods were transported to and from the area by rail. When rail transport began to diminish, the number of transport trucks on the highway increased and has continued to do so ever since. To respond to the growing use of transport trucks, the province of Ontario changed laws so that these commercial vehicles could carry heavier loads. The allowable length of a transport truck was increased as well. This meant more transports on the road with heavier weights; heavier loads, less handling of the trucks. The road is literally one designed in and for a bygone era and is not reflective of today's transportation dynamics.

In November 2002, in the course of his research, Bartolucci discovered that in the early 1970s the Ontario government completed two environmental and feasibility studies that could be used today to greatly expedite the multi-laning of the highway. The 1974 study concluded:

"Ministry studies indicate that the existing Highway 69 route in the study area does not have sufficient capacity to serve transportation demands over the next 20 years. This conclusion is based on the premise that the movement of goods and people will continue to increase along projected growth trends.... Such growth can be expected to place greater demands on this route, and ministry studies indicate that a ... highway of the divided type will be required in the future to solve transportation problems in the study area."

Mr Bartolucci's efforts continued to create a community awareness and critical mass of people who wanted the road multi-laned. To date, 28,000 petition signatures, 7,645 electronic signatures and 11,000 bumper stickers document the community's commitment to this cause.

I believe Rick's leadership embodies what is good and right about your work as MPPs. I am sure by now, and I know by the conversation around the table, that Messrs Spina, Arnott, Beaubien, Christopherson, O'Toole and Sampson are thinking this is a totally inappropriate testimonial by a friend and supporter of Rick Bartolucci.

**Mr O'Toole:** Campaign chair.

**Mr Lougheed:** Not yet.

You might even conclude, "We're not even listening." But then, I forgot to tell you what I do for a living. I am an undertaker.

My work environment is a place of sadness. I have been a funeral director for over 25 years. In fact, under Mr Davis's government, I was appointed the chair of the Board of Funeral Services for the then Minister of Health, Larry Grossman. I try to help bereaved people, whether listening to their stories of life and death or

providing information that helps answer the question, "What happens next?"

Last summer I felt professionally and personally inadequate. I sat in my office with a man named Bob. He was the father and grandfather of Kelly, Jordan and Corbin, who were all killed in an accident on Highway 69 at the Killarney turnoff. He tells the story of how Kelly and her boys had spent a wonderful few days with him and his dear wife, whom he fondly calls "Mother." He talks of canoe trips and barbecues. His voice decreases and tears increase as he explains that Kelly had to go back to work the next day and had said, "I had better get going; I'll be doing laundry till one in the morning." Kelly, Jordan and Corbin kissed him and his wife and started back to Sudbury, likely the same time a transport truck, unfamiliar with the road, would be passing through McFarlane Lake, south of the Sudbury city limits.

I'm sure that, like all moms, who love their kids, Kelly's car was full of conversation about the great days spent with Grandma and Granddad. As she and her twin boys, one passionate about basketball, the other passionate about hockey, navigated the curve, the transport truck did not. The rig crossed the road and they were killed. They did nothing wrong. There were no adverse weather conditions, no errant wildlife, no reckless risk-taking. Kelly and her sons were going home to do laundry, go to work and play some baseball. This accident is wrong. Bob and his supportive son Ron should not have been in my office.

This accident happened because the road is wrong. It is wrong in its design according to professional truck drivers. The greater wrong is that 49 people have died on this highway since 1999. Once upon a time, partisan voices—and maybe that was the mumbling around the table—could say that Highway 69 was four-laned to Honey Harbour because then-Premier Bill Davis had a cottage in that area or that four-laning continued to Parry Sound because now-Premier Ernie Eves was Treasurer.

Now the issue is way beyond partisan politics. It's all about people, people who drive in their cars with their kids from their parents' camp to do laundry and to go back to work. I believe the Ontario government should immediately correct this curve and four-lane from the Killarney turnoff to the adjacent hill. Such a commitment would acknowledge the tragedy and create a lasting legacy to Kelly and her boys and prevent another accident. It was then that I joined Rick's campaign for action in expediting this paving project. If anyone at this table or outside this table thinks it's about politics, I invite them to come to my office and to speak to Bob, because I think you might get a whole different take on exactly what the debate is about. My reason for coming here today is to make sure rhetoric becomes reality. You have the ability to translate promises into pavement and promises into policing.

To date, CRASH 69 has met with Allan Rock regarding his support for the project. When you asked me about chairing a campaign, I also sat on the Prime Minister's national forum on health. I had the opportunity

through Mr Rock under his Ministry of Health portfolio, and through that friendship was able to access a meeting with him to discuss this project. I can tell you, Mr O'Toole, that Mr Rock is very keen about this project, as is Mr Mitchell, who as you know is the cabinet representative for that particular area of Ontario.

CRASH 69 has met with the Robinson Huron Treaty First Nations, who unanimously have supported this project. They have appointed Chief John Beaucage from the Parry Sound area to sit on the committee. Someone in the House, and I'm not sure who, made the comment that the delay in the paving was because of the First Nations people. Trust me: Chief Beaucage and his fellow chiefs take exception to that comment and in fact are quite prepared to negotiate and expedite any timelines to make the paving a reality.

CRASH 69 has secured flashing lights and improved shoulder conditions at the treacherous Killarney turnoff that I made reference to in the Kelly, Jordan and Corbin story.

CRASH 69 has received the financial support of many labour groups which have sponsored 20 billboards that will be erected next month to embark on a "From Promise to Pavement" campaign.

Some CRASH 69 committee members, myself included, attended the Premier's press conference in November, during which he pledged \$1 billion to four-lane Highway 69 over the next 10 years. Ten years will include at least two general elections in Ontario and a decade of annual budgets. We need your committee to show us the money in this budget. We want you to include three items in the budget: first, at least \$75 million in a 2003-04 budget to match federal monies which are available. Yesterday I spoke with Allan Rock's office and I know these monies are available under the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund or Mr Collenette's strategic highways infrastructure program. I also know the Ontario government has included Highway 69 on its wish list of priorities for highways to be discussed and negotiated. So we want Ontario's share committed in this budget.

**1430**

Second, CRASH 69 unanimously supports the Robinson Huron First Nations' request for three more police officers, at an approximate cost of \$500,000. We are writing to Mr Tsubouchi to encourage this long-overdue need for increased police services in First Nations communities. As you're likely aware, First Nations officers can ticket on provincial highways, and they would also be able to secure police services in First Nations' properties so the OPP do not necessarily have to be on the property and can stay on the corridor.

Third, we would ask that your committee communicate with OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface on increasing the number of officers and cruisers in the Highway 69 corridor. It is unacceptable to pretend that there is sufficient policing by paying overtime on holiday weekends. A short-term solution to reduce the traffic

tragedies would be a daily commitment to a proper police presence on Highway 69.

In summary, the tragic legacy of Highway 69 is well documented. The political leaders, by the way, of all your respective parties have promised action about this asphalt. We now need your commitment to translate their rhetoric into a budget reality.

We do not want a re-announcement of monies earmarked for the 20 kilometres south of Sudbury that the Premier announced at his press conference in November. That money is in this budget, not the next budget. We want new money in your budget recommendations in order to leverage new federal monies to pave at least an additional 50 kilometres in the fiscal year 2003-04. We do not want to hear the platitudes and promises about police in speeches; we want to see them stopping speeders on Highway 69.

I close, aware that your committee has a very important task in striking a budget which likely will be scrutinized and debated during the upcoming election.

In 1896, a politician from Montana by the name of Charles Hartman said, "It is true that the populist party has a number of different remedies for the situation. And I am advised that they are about to add three additional planks to their platform. One of them is to make a cross between the lightning bug and the honeybee for the purpose of enabling the bee to work at night; another, that of breeding the centipede with the hog for the purpose of having a hundred hams to each animal; and I am told they have a further visionary scheme of budding strawberries into milkweeds, so that everybody can have strawberries and cream from the same plant."

Today, people, please do not have an updated version of that statement to be someone's election platform, which would include breeding nuisance bears with nuisance beavers to have a creature that can build a road and give speeding tickets. CRASH 69 does not want any more promises; we want pavement and we want policing.

**The Chair:** That leaves us with just about five minutes. For the record, there are two of us sitting up here, myself and Mr Johnston, who were born and raised in Sault Ste Marie and have travelled that road for 30 years anyway.

**Mr Lougheed:** Do you know what, Joe? You'd be very pleased to know that the first group to sign on was the Soo city council. You know that everybody is pretty territorial about where money should go, and Soo city council actually said, "Pave 69."

**The Chair:** Didn't John Rhodes start it? Anyway, I'm sorry, I'm taking up committee time. We begin with the government.

**Mr Beaubien:** Thank you very much for your unbiased presentation. I must admit that once I have a discussion and Mr O'Toole has a discussion with me, that's our time.

With regard to Highway 69—

**Mr Lougheed:** Thank you for the correction.

**Mr Beaubien:** I didn't interrupt you when you made your presentation.



**Mr Lougheed:** You were interrupting me.

**Mr Beaubien:** You mention that in 1974, Bill Davis knew that the road needed attention—I do agree with you—and you mention this is going to be an issue in the upcoming election. I would also like to point out to you that I do have roads in my constituency that need attention, where people have lost their lives. I know what it's all about. We almost lost a son last year. His accident was not his fault. Any accident is tragic. So just to zero in on one particular aspect of the province—I share your concern, but there are other concerns in the province of Ontario. That's all I have to say.

**Mr Lougheed:** Sir, your Premier has committed \$1 billion in 10 years. That commitment is on the record by Mr Eves. I've had a long relationship with Mr Eves, because he was one of the strongest supporters of getting the cancer centre here in northeastern Ontario. I believe if Mr Eves says something, he's going to do it, but he needs these commitments to be shown to the people of Ontario within this budget.

I totally agree with you. In fact, we actually have people on Highway 17 who are quite inspired by what we're doing on Highway 69 and who have asked how they'd form a committee to lobby for effective roads too. So in your area, I would certainly hope people would say, "Look, if they can do that on Highway 69, maybe they can do it in Mr Beaubien's riding as well."

**The Chair:** We move to the government bench—sorry, to the official opposition.

**Mr Bartolucci:** The government bench? That's a Freudian slip.

**Mr Lougheed:** I'd be in favour of that.

**Mr Bartolucci:** I hardly think that should be called the Bartolucci Highway. I would much rather it be called after any number of the people who have tragically died on that road because they chose to ride on an inferior highway.

Thank you very much, Gerry, for an excellent presentation. Just for the record, I didn't write the speech but I thank you for it.

It certainly has been a community effort. When we talk about CRASH, the words are about citizens and a community rallying against an inferior highway.

What I think the committee should know is clearly what the expectations of CRASH 69 are with regard to this budget. How much money does CRASH 69 want allocated specifically for Highway 69?

**Mr Lougheed:** Minimally, in terms of the pavement issue, \$75 million, because as you know the feds will have that \$75 million. In fact, if the province wants to take a leadership role and have more than \$75 million, I think those negotiations with Ottawa are open for beyond \$75 million. But I also know there are great pressures on the budget, so if you can get \$75 million, I would think that's a minimum.

Chief Beaucage tells us that for each police officer who is hired, it's \$180,000, so that's why the half million dollars with regard to the First Nations policing, which as

you know would be negotiated at the federal level as well with the province.

In the last area, last weekend I met with Chief Superintendent Carson Fougere, who represents north-eastern Ontario for the OPP, and he's prepared to have a meeting with us to discuss the need for the budget to be increased on the Highway 69 corridor. That's why I ask you to talk to Gwen Boniface, because I think those are ongoing negotiations.

So a minimum of \$75 million, half a million for the First Nations police officers and then I think an appropriate allotment within the OPP negotiations.

**The Chair:** We move to the NDP.

**Mr Christopherson:** Thank you for your presentation. We might, tongue in cheek, kid a bit about some of the over-the-top words about any of this, such as what you did, but I don't think anybody here is not taking seriously the fact that we're talking life and death. To be fair to Mr Beaubien, we do have other life-and-death issues that come in front of us, and trying to set that priority, regardless of what party you come from, is part of the internal moral struggle that everyone who has a say in the budget development goes through.

Having said that, you're also a small business person. You run your own business—or a family business, perhaps. Given the importance of life-and-death issues—homelessness; we've just heard presentations about children's mental health, where their lives are at risk—given the need to pay for all those things, as a small business person, do you think that in order to pay for these things, these life-and-death issues, we, if need be, should be prepared to forgo any planned tax cuts and indeed roll back any if necessary to find the money to save lives?

**Mr Lougheed:** You likely couldn't ask a better person in Ontario that question, David, because I am the chair of the Heart and Soul Campaign, which is building the regional hospital, the cancer centre and the long-term-care facilities. I'm very familiar with the issue of the need for dollars in health care and social justice issues. Last week I got a speaking fee in Ottawa so that I could get a down payment of \$5,000 to service a lot in Azilda so that Habitat for Humanity can build a home for a needy family. I have a tremendous social justice conscience, and I very much understand what you're asking me.

I thought the most expensive \$200 I ever got in my life was a cheque from the Ontario government. That money should have stayed in the system to help those in need and also to help the quality of health care and education in the system. I don't think we should be trading off things. Ontario is a very rich province. There are very bright people who can run this province and, I believe, can meet the needs. So I don't think it's a matter—my brother runs the food bank. The food bank has a permanent building. Why?

**The Chair:** That concludes our time. Thank you, Mr Lougheed. We appreciate it.

The Ontario Trails Council is due at 3 o'clock, and not all the members are here. They've asked us to defer. So the committee will recess until 3 pm, at which time we will return.

*The committee recessed from 1440 to 1501.*

#### ONTARIO TRAILS COUNCIL

**The Chair:** We resume the committee. Our delegation is the Ontario Trails Council. Please be kind enough, when you speak, to state your names for the purpose of the record. You have up to 20 minutes; at the end of your presentation, any time left over will be used for questions and answers. Welcome.

**Mr Patrick Connor:** Thank you very much, Mr Spina. I'd like to thank the committee on behalf of the member organizations of the Ontario Trails Council. My name is Patrick Connor; I am the executive director of the Ontario Trails Council. Carol McIsaac is president and chair of the Ontario Trails Council; she is also an avid trails rider. John Broderick is also a member of the Ontario Trails Council; he is here today representing the Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicle Clubs. Ian Wood is also a board member of Ontario Trails Council and works with tourism and economics here in Sudbury; he is with a local trails organization called Rainbow Routes.

There are a number of reasons we're here today. Many of them are partly educational, but more importantly, trails in Ontario are facing some pretty significant needs. Historically, trails are a non-government-supported industry. Trails in Ontario, of which there are about some 60,000 to 65,000, are facing unprecedented pressures. Trails and trails organizations are entirely based on a voluntary sector, run, by and large, by non-profits or charitable organizations and staffed predominantly by volunteers.

Trails are used by about five million people in the province, and we are tabling here today an economic brief for your consideration that details some of the issues that are facing trails. In our analysis, and in terms of some of the studies, we estimate that trails represent a \$2.5-billion economy to the province and throughout communities. Trails are well represented in every community throughout the province. They provide health, peace of mind and recreational activity; they have certain economic impacts; and they operate in rural and urban landscapes. What we're looking for from the finance committee is some consideration in terms of the allocation of financial resources in two of four specific areas: basically a support system for trails and trail infrastructures; and our trails organizations, because they are non-profit, are facing unprecedented insurance pressures never before seen. So we are looking for some short-term crisis cash influx. In appendix II of the economic brief, we lay out what we're looking for: somewhere between \$8 million and \$8.5 million, which we don't think is unreasonable, given a \$2.5-billion industry.

Perhaps Carol would like to offer a little bit of insight in terms of trails and their history and what they mean to the province.

**Ms Carol McIsaac:** Historically, trails have had a rather big impact for our province. It is not uncommon to be able to go out, whether you're young or old, healthy or handicapped, and be able to appreciate the beauty of a trail. In the past, horses and wagons predominated and basically started the routes. That's how trails and roadways and such went in. I won't bore you with too much history on how trail widths and such came about. It is now predominantly a way of linking communities. Our local group—I am with the Uthhoff Trail; one of the many hats I wear, besides being the equine representative for the province, is that I also sit on the Uthhoff Trail group. The Uthhoff Trail links two communities, Orillia and Coldwater. It's 25-kilometre trail and it allows people from both communities to sort of meet halfway or to cycle from one end and have lunch at the other and then cycle home.

A lot of communities are doing that. Simcoe county is starting to become a pretty good hotbed, I guess you could say, for trails, because we're working on having an entire loop so you can tour and see the entire county. But it is hard for the local groups to maintain their trails with the insurance crisis and such like that we're having right now, because a lot of our user groups are experiencing major price upheavals in insurance. Because we're volunteer-based, most trail and local organizations are trying to become sustainable on their own. Uthhoff Trail is one of the very few trails in the province that has become successful at that, because we're very good at raising funds. It could be because of the type of committee behind that, but not everyone has the doctors and lawyers who can take the time to become trail committee people and bring money on to the trails as successfully as they do.

The other trails we have in the province that have the farmers and the other backgrounds—I shouldn't knock the farmers, because I am one—don't have the cash influx that some of ours do. And in the northern parts of our province, because the towns are so far apart, you're drawing from a very small volunteer base. Basically, what historically happens is that you end up with a lot of gaps in trails. To unite the province and have a good trails system, we need to find some method to stop the gaps.

When the Trans Canada Trail water relay went through a couple of years ago, it really helped unite the province and it started another resurgence in trails, because people got excited about the Trans Canada Trail project. But it's only 65% complete here in Ontario. There are still a lot of gaps where the water relay did use water. It is sad to see, since we have the resources—we have the abandoned rail lines, we have the roadways. Why can't we just pick up and use them as trails for everyone? But there we run into problems such as land ownership.

That's where trails as business comes in. There's a model project that I'll let John speak more on, the Elliott Lake ATV project that has been going. I'll give John a moment in a bit to explain what's happening with the Elliott Lake community there. Since it's ATV, it's his bailiwick. If you want to know about horses, I'm the girl, but the motorized I don't do. I do everything else on the trail but motorized stuff.

**Mr John Broderick:** We're working on that.

**Ms McIsaac:** It has happened and it will happen again. I'm totally under the impression that we can all go out there, share a trail and get along.

The Trails Council represents all the trails users: the dogsledders, the snowmobilers, the hikers, the cyclists, the canoeists. You name it, we have them on our board. We're looking to provide the government with a unified voice saying, "We have everyone represented on our board, so if you give us the lead we can strategically join you and help you help us get a trails policy in place that will help the implementation and building of trails so that everything is uniform."

1510

There are single-use trails. Hikers love their single-use trails, and there's nothing wrong with the single-use trail. I support that fully, because there are places the hikers and the snowmobilers go that I wouldn't consider going. But there are also the public-use, shared multi-use trails, and multi-use trails are basically what we're really trying to represent, push and get moving forward. Our biggest problem in trying to take this movement forward is that when we come to speak to government officials for grants and things like that, we have very many doors to knock on. It would be much easier for us to have a lead minister to look after us. That would make me very happy.

John, would you like to say a few words on the Elliot Lake project?

**Mr Broderick:** And ATVs in general. At the inception of the pilot project in Elliot Lake, we had 27 clubs in the province. We currently have 22. That tells a story in itself. At the inception, we had a third-party liability policy. It cost the federation roughly \$30,000 a year. For quite a period of time not only was it unfeasible for us to buy third-party liability; we just couldn't buy it, period. It wasn't on the market.

We've seen what has happened in snowmobiling in the last two years, where it went from \$300,000 to over \$3 million. If that continues, it's going to be tough on snowmobiling, for that matter.

We are a new organization. We didn't have the resources that the snowmobiling community had to draw on, so it was pretty tough for a lot of our clubs and we lost a few of them because of it.

Getting back to the Elliot Lake pilot project, it's about half way through its initial phase. The intent there was to build a model to show how the economic benefits of ATVs impact a community. To date, it's moving along at a good pace—it has had a few hiccups—and we hope to move that into other communities in the near future.

Right now, however, the insurance issue is our major stumbling block for it.

**Mr Connor:** The fundamental problem with the insurance that is we have no particular government department that we can go to. There's no funded process for strategically assessing, there's no strategic planning process for the development and implementation of trails or for the discussion of issues that really are putting this economy at risk.

In order for us to effectively discuss trail implementation, trail issues, in order for us to provide some consensus in bringing the insurance industry to the table so that we can discuss the viability of this tourist economy, we need the support of government to help us get there, because as underfunded, non-governmental organizations, we just aren't capable of doing it.

There are some documents in the appendix that speak to the development of a trails policy and the development of a trails institute. The value that trails provide to the economy has been very well studied, as has the love that Ontarians have for them. It flows with every demographic, as Carol was saying, and we've seen a real growth in terms of urban trails, park-to-park trails, municipal and others.

If you could just take a brief look at appendix 1, which is the coloured map, which we've also put up on the back here, it actually represents some 250 organizations that are in all the 12 tourist regions, representing hikers, equestrians, cyclists, canoeists, dogsledders. Roughly 1,000 kilometres of trail equates to 1,000 jobs, so when these organizations can't get insurance, you're really looking at the livelihood of many persons along the trail being put at risk. So again, we are looking to develop some relationships with a lead ministry.

Currently there are nine different provincial ministries that are involved in trails and trails operations, and there are over 18 pieces of legislation that govern, from conservancy laws to the Line Fences Act to the Occupiers' Liability Act. So without a strategic think tank, we really don't have anywhere to go. We need some of this legislation amended specifically so that landowners who are at risk of recreational trails use currently, will not be. We're also looking for some changes in terms of the way contingency lawsuits can take place, the way that proportional liability can be assigned.

As you can see, we cover so many wide and complex areas that, really, we need a well-funded process so that we can sit down and discuss our issues with the government, because there are so many ministries that are interested in what we do and people from every political stripe. Carol?

**Ms McIsaac:** I'll use my riding instructor voice.

**The Chair:** Hopefully the microphone will pick you up.

**Ms McIsaac:** OK. I'll quickly go across. I know yours are quite small, but the little blue squares represent members of the Ontario Trails Council, versus the other colours, which are people we are still to draw in. It has

been broken into the 12 tourist regions, as Patrick has mentioned.

**The Chair:** Carol, I'm going to have to ask you to either come closer to the microphone or find another method, because it's not picking you up clearly.

**Ms McIsaac:** OK.

Then it goes into trail-user organizations, breaking it into user groups and then showing which user group is in what area, and then from the user groups serving regional councils. We're finding it is a much easier way of governance, and having membership on the OTC board, if each region is represented. You get to know the regions' needs, wants and desires, because what the Dundas Valley Conservation Area needs in the south isn't necessarily going to be the same thing that Ian needs here in the north. Primarily in the south right now the Line Fences Act is a problem that a lot of the southern trails are dealing with because of ownership issues, and the Trespass to Property Act. We're getting e-mails daily in the OTC office asking, "What can we do? How can we do this?" In the north we have the distance as a barrier, but it does show that there are folks up here. We just need to find a few more of them and get them on to the map.

We found when we produced this document that there were more connections with the communities across the province than we were totally aware of. It's one thing to be a provincial advocacy group, but when you actually see the memberships and the people who are buying into the trails council and working in the trails movement, it lets you know that people really are interested and really do care.

**The Chair:** Is that it?

1520

**Mr Ian Wood:** If I can just give you a quick northern perspective, I got involved in trails as the economic development officer for the town of Walden, which was one of the municipalities that is now part of the city of greater Sudbury. We saw trails as an economic development tool and continue to, even as a larger city.

I work with a volunteer group called the Rainbow Routes Association, which is a local group that seeks to develop trails.

I can talk about two things the current government has supported. We had a workshop two years ago called the Trails North workshop that was supported by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, which brought people from across the north. It was the first time we were ever able to get people from right across the north to talk about recreational trails and how those could come together. That produced a report which spoke to the same things we're speaking to you about today, which is the need to have a single ministry, a single clearing house, for us to go to on the provincial level. And certainly I should recognize the heritage fund's commitment to the northern trails program over the last two years, which has provided significant dollars for capital infusion to create trails. Again, it was almost too big a program for the capabilities, the infrastructure, of the

volunteer groups that have been out there trying to implement it, and we are implementing it. I think it will have a big impact for us. But again, it speaks to the capacity building that needs to happen.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That constitutes your full 20 minutes. We appreciate the input. I'm sure the committee will take this into account. For the purpose of the committee, there has been a cabinet minute struck under the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation to try to address this issue under Minister Klees. At this point, its organizational structure is still not confirmed. That's all I can tell you at this point. Thank you for your presentation.

#### MUNICIPALITY OF WEST NIPISSING

**The Chair:** Our last presenter this afternoon is the municipality of West Nipissing, who were not scheduled till 3:40. However, they are here and are prepared to go at 3:20, so we'd ask them to please come forward.

You'll have 20 minutes. Any time left over from your presentation will be used for questions. Please state your names clearly for the record. Welcome. Thank you for making it, because I'm sure coming from Sturgeon wasn't a nice drive.

**Ms Joanne Savage:** Thank you for the warm greeting. My name is Joanne Savage. I'm a councillor with the municipality of West Nipissing.

**Ms Lise Sénécal:** My name is Lise Sénécal. I'm also a councillor for West Nipissing.

**Ms Savage:** The ride was treacherous. I've had to wait here upstairs for two hours, but at least I'm relaxed.

I'd like to start off by saying thank you for the opportunity, for listening to us. We were fortunate, through our provincial MPP, David Ramsay, to be aware that this session was going on and to be provided the opportunity to present to you something that we really have at heart and an issue that is critical in West Nipissing. The issue pertains to the lack of funding for long-term-care services for our seniors.

We are a newly amalgamated municipality since 1999, grouping five former incorporated areas along with 17.5 unincorporated areas. For those who don't know West Nipissing, we are located between Sudbury and North Bay. Our population consists of a total of 13,114 residents. The geography exceeds slightly over 800 kilometres.

West Nipissing is and has been acknowledged by the Ministry of Health as a hot spot because of its aging population and the process that's presently utilized by the province of Ontario to allocate long-term-care beds and services to our seniors. Out of the 13,114 residents that we have in West Nipissing, 860 residents are seniors aged 75 or older. The number of seniors over the age of 65 exceeds 2,000. These statistics were gathered from the 2001 census.

According to the census of 2001, the number of seniors we will have in West Nipissing who will be age

65 or more will exceed 3,000 within the next eight years. Therefore, we do have to act now.

The funding formula of the province of Ontario for long-term-care beds is based on a universal formula across the province which does not meet the needs of long-term care to our seniors in West Nipissing. There is nothing more critical than when you see seniors who were born and raised in our community, who invested in their community, were established, raised their family, and now that they require long-term care—not by choice but by need—they are being moved away from their home, moved away from their families, from their roots, and being placed in nursing homes outside their community.

Presently, the actual formula identifies that West Nipissing is over-funded for long-term-care beds. Why? Because the allocation of beds for long-term care is as follows: for every 1,000 people over age 75, 100 beds are funded. The formula does not take into account seniors from 65 to 74. Needless to say, these people, even though they're 65 to 74, also require long-term care.

At Au Chauteau Home for the Aged, the nursing home we have in West Nipissing—we only have one—29 of the seniors are under 75 and require long-term-care service.

We also have many residents of West Nipissing who are not 75 nor 65—they are less than 65 years old—but because of serious illnesses such as Huntington's, cystic fibrosis, Alzheimer's, require long-term care. But the formula does not take this into consideration. As a result, what we see now and have been seeing for the last few years is that more and more of our seniors are being moved out of their community. Being at an age when they are fragile as to their state of health, this is very critical for their well-being. We've had seniors, because of this deployment, who were not able to bear it and passed away.

Seventy per cent of the population in West Nipissing is francophone, but we have a higher number of francophones among our seniors. A high percentage of our seniors are also unilingual: either they speak only French or they speak only English. Try to visualize having a loved one placed in a nursing home where they would not be able to communicate their needs and who, being away from their family members, would have to rely on the services—I'm not criticizing the professional level of those providing the actual care or saying that the institution does not operate efficiently, but just that they are not able to communicate. It has always been identified as an issue that possibly could be challenged to the Human Rights Commission.

At this point, we have 64 residents on a waiting list for our nursing home. Ironically, we are basically telling them, "Wait until someone dies, and then there will be a bed. If there aren't enough seniors dying, then guess what? You'll have to move outside the boundaries of your community." This is really unacceptable and unfair treatment to our seniors. I personally don't think any level of government can visualize these people as or

make them feel they are a burden to society, not after investing everything they have and all the good deeds they have done.

#### 1530

What's really ironic as well is that we've had a lot of contact with different people in the Ministry of Health. Some nursing homes have difficulty achieving 100% occupancy of their beds. It's ironic that in West Nipissing it's the opposite: the demand exceeds the supply.

In 2001, the Ministry of Health, after being made aware of numerous complaints, agreed that West Nipissing was a hot spot; therefore, they allocated six interim beds. The only place these interim beds could be hosted was at the West Nipissing General Hospital. Since those beds were introduced at West Nipissing, they have been occupied every day. We've had one senior lying in one of those beds in excess of 800 days while waiting for a long-term-care bed in our nursing home. We're advised that these interim beds will be removed at the end of March; therefore, it's start decommissioning these beds, start moving around our seniors, find them a place, because they are not capable of moving back home.

After communicating—the hospital, the community and even the municipality—to the Ministry of Health, we were fortunate to be provided with an extension. We were told there would be an additional six months provided. But at the end of the day, this is only a Band-Aid solution. Whether we decommission the beds now or do that five months from now, the end result will be the same.

In 2002, the Ministry of Health allocated 20,000 new long-term-care beds across the province. West Nipissing was not one of those provided. Even worse, in 2003 we find out that these six interim beds are being removed.

I have a hard time accepting the fact that we are tampering with the fragile state of health of our seniors. They are not in these beds by choice but by need.

I had a phone call from a resident of West Nipissing at the beginning of this week, a lady. She had difficulty speaking to me on the phone. She was in tears, devastated. Her mother was in one of those six interim beds, and the family opted to provide her with a bed that became available in a nursing home outside our community. Her mother is going through a major depression. She is scared that this can cost her mother her life. She was asking me, "Joanne, should I bring my mother back to one of these interim beds, since the hospital has made me aware that there has been an extension? If I do that, maybe my mother is going to be better. But what happens to my mom in September? Where does she go in September? She won't be able to survive another move."

We are here today to request that the six interim beds remain in West Nipissing until permanent solutions are in place. We are requesting that adequate funding be provided toward long-term care.

One of the issues the government of Ontario can look at would be decreasing the age factor in their formula from 75 to 65. That would make a difference for West

Nipissing. They should also take into account residents with serious illnesses.

The government of Ontario should ensure that there is a task force in place for areas that are designated as hot spots and that they initiate a process of identifying permanent solutions. Additional funding to community care access centres should also be looked at, because one of the solutions also would be to assist our seniors to remain home for a longer period. Even subsidizing retirement homes could be a long-term solution.

We trust that this government or the next government will consider this a critical issue for the well-being of our people.

We, councillors of West Nipissing, along with the residents of West Nipissing, will not lay the issue to rest until something is done. The first step would be to provide West Nipissing with these six interim beds on a permanent basis.

**Ms Sénécal:** Usually I talk more than her. Today she proved me wrong.

J'aimerais faire un bref sommaire de cette présentation dans notre langue maternelle, qui est le français.

La municipalité de Nipissing Ouest reconnaît depuis des années déjà le besoin urgent d'adresser les soins à long terme dans notre communauté. À maintes reprises, le conseil municipal a soulevé le problème avec notre gouvernement provincial, soit par lettres de support, résolutions etc, sans vraiment réussir à aller de l'avant, et même parfois il y semblerait perdre du terrain au lieu d'en gagner. Présentement, la menace de nous enlever nos six lits intérimaires à notre hôpital général de Nipissing Ouest renforce fortement le besoin de réagir et de demander à notre gouvernement, présent ou prochain, de réagir immédiatement.

Nous devons, comme citoyens et citoyennes canadiens, nous demander les questions suivantes :

Est-ce un privilège d'accéder à des soins à long terme, ou est-ce un droit ?

Est-ce un privilège de vouloir demeurer dans un environnement où nous sommes nés, où nous avons grandi, travaillé et fondé notre famille, ou est-ce un droit ?

Est-ce un privilège de vouloir se faire servir dans notre langue maternelle, ou est-ce un droit ?

Est-ce un privilège de vouloir mourir avec dignité et entouré de notre famille et de nos amis, ou est-ce un droit ?

Il faut surtout se rappeler que vieillir n'est pas une maladie, mais un processus auquel nous tous ferons face à un temps ou autre. Directement ou indirectement, cette cause nous affecte personnellement et continuera de nous affliger dans le futur.

Ce que nous demandons présentement au nom de tous les résidents et résidentes de la municipalité de Nipissing Ouest, c'est que notre gouvernement provincial prenne, sans plus tarder, les actions suivantes :

Garder en permanence les lits à notre hôpital général de Nipissing Ouest jusqu'à ce que des solutions plus permanentes soient mises en place. Imaginer l'apaise-

ment que cette décision apportera aux personnes utilisant les lits présentement et à leur famille.

Structurer un comité stratégique avec les gens clés de notre municipalité afin de pouvoir développer des solutions à long terme qui satisferont les besoins spécifiques de notre communauté.

Réévaluer la formule utilisée pour allouer les lits et faire les ajustements nécessaires pour assurer une flexibilité qui saurait voir aux besoins de notre population vieillissante.

Réviser la formule présentement utilisée pour évaluer le niveau de services, et s'assurer d'une distribution plus équitable dans nos foyers.

Enfin, s'assurer de remplir l'engagement fait en 1998 par ce gouvernement d'investir 551,8 \$ millions pour les soins à long terme. Si on se base sur les derniers calculs, il resterait quelque 257 \$ millions qui pourraient être répartis et alloués pour les soins à long terme dans nos communautés sous-subsidées, telles que la nôtre, Nipissing Ouest.

Aux représentants qui siègent présentement et qui sont assis autour de cette table, représentants de notre gouvernement présent : j'espère que vous vous ferez notre porte-parole à notre gouvernement pour apporter nos préoccupations. Et aux représentants qui siègent autour de cette table aujourd'hui et qui siègeront peut-être sur notre prochain gouvernement, je demande la même chose.

Je vous remercie sincèrement et j'espère que vous porterez à coeur notre demande, ou nos préoccupations. Merci.

**The Vice-Chair:** Merci beaucoup. Thank you very much. We have time for a brief question from each caucus.

**Mr Kwinter:** Thank you very much for your presentation. Could you tell me, when the last call for proposals for long-term-care facilities was announced, did West Nipissing make a proposal for long-term-care facilities?

**Ms Sénécal:** Of course. We were maybe the first one to do so, but because of the existing formula that's in place right now, they say that we are over bed. But they don't take into consideration, as my colleague was saying, the fact that even for people who are under 65, you're using 29 beds right now because of different illnesses, and we are an aging population. The formula they are using right now is not fair, is not equitable. We cannot use a formula to evaluate all across the province. We should go, and governments should go, pertaining to the need of the community. That's why we were not given any more beds. But as statistics show, we are in desperate need. Right now, as of today, if by a miracle a home for the aged were built and Sturgeon Falls closed the old chateau, you would have 48 persons who would be taking up residence tomorrow. That's how bad it is.

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**Le Vice-Président:** Monsieur Christopherson, avez-vous une question ?

**Mr Christopherson:** Merci. Now I'm done.

There's a term—a horrible term, actually; it's too bad that it has taken hold—called “bed blockers.” You may

know the term. It refers to people who should be in a long-term-care facility but aren't. They can't go home and have nowhere else to go, so they stay in a hospital, where the costs are astronomical. The thinking is that they're sort of blocking that bed, if you will, from someone else using it, which gives a negative connotation to them, as if they're doing something wrong by being sick. In the continuum of your system in most communities, that's part of it. One of the ideas is to reduce that so we could either use those hospital beds for other purposes or reduce the beds to save money and put the money, hopefully, into community health care. Do you have that situation in West Nipissing? If you do, what are the numbers like?

**Ms Savage:** Right now, in les soins continus, les soins aigus, the beds are fully utilized. However, the six interim beds were beds that were put aside and should have gone to the nursing home, but because they didn't have the space to put them in, they put them at the hospital.

**Mr Christopherson:** But they were designated to be interim beds. What I'm getting at is, in the regular hospital system, are there people occupying other beds above and beyond the six who, if there were places in the community, would be there?

**Ms Sénécal:** Eighteen beds.

**Ms Savage:** Eighteen.

**Mr Christopherson:** That's what I was looking for.

**Le Vice-Président:** Le gouvernement ?

**M. Beaubien:** Merci. Vraiment j'essaie de comprendre ce que vous avez discuté, parce que vous êtes la seule présentation que l'on ait reçue sur les soins à long terme avec le problème que vous avez présenté cet après-midi.

Dans ma circonscription dans le sud-ouest de l'Ontario, vraiment j'ai beaucoup de personnes qui sont au-dessus de l'âge de 65 ou 75 ans, si je regarde le dernier recensement. Je vais comparer les pourcentages dans ma circonscription avec ceux de Nipissing Ouest. Si vous aviez fait cette présentation-là il y a quatre ans, je pourrais comprendre pourquoi vous avez une difficulté. Mais aujourd'hui j'ai beaucoup de difficulté à comprendre pourquoi vous n'avez pas les lits de longue durée à Nipissing Ouest. Si on compare la démographie, les vieillards dans ma circonscription, avec celle de la région de Nipissing Ouest, on est au même niveau, puis nous n'avons pas de difficulté avec les lits en ce moment-ci.

**M<sup>me</sup> Sénécal:** Ça fait toi et moi qui ne comprenons pas, parce que j'ai beaucoup de difficulté, moi aussi, à comprendre. Il n'y a aucune raison aujourd'hui d'être dans la situation critique où l'on se trouve présentement à Nipissing Ouest. C'est pour ça que l'on est ici aujourd'hui.

Ça fait ma neuvième année au conseil municipal. Ça fait des années qu'on « lobby », si je peux utiliser ce terme, notre gouvernement, le ministère de la Santé, pour avoir des lits, et pas seulement des lits. Il faut juste penser aux coupures qui existaient dans les dernières années dans ce qu'on appelle le « home care ».

Je vais vous donner un exemple. Je prends soin de mes parents. J'ai déboursé 50 000 \$ en 1995 pour faire une rallonge pour garder mes parents. Ils étaient bien en ce temps-là, six ans passés. Ils se débrouillaient. Mais plus que ça va—mon père a 80 ans et ma mère a 78 ans, unilingues français les deux. Ils ne veulent rien savoir de s'en aller à North Bay ou à Sudbury—rien contre le service.

**M. Beaubien:** Je comprends. Mon père a 92 ans; ma mère a 90 ans.

**M<sup>me</sup> Sénécal:** S'il y avait des gens qui pourraient aller les aider à la maison, y mettre des argents, c'est ça. Il y a une question de lits, définitivement, mais c'est tout le système.

**M. Beaubien:** Puis le ministère ? Qu'est-ce qu'ils vous disent ?

**M<sup>me</sup> Sénécal:** Ils vont les enlever, les lits intérim.

**M<sup>me</sup> Savage:** Mais aussi en prenant en considération, comme Lise a mentionné tantôt : the ministry identified that we are being overfunded, because they're taking into account the age factor of 75 and more. But they don't realize that we have a high volume of seniors who are less than 75, and that's the whole issue.

We have in areas to the west of us two nursing homes. They're having difficulty filling all their beds for long-term care. We here in West Nipissing have a waiting list. It's been an issue that has been growing slightly and slightly. Ça s'en vient à un point culminant. Ce qui arrive, on a fait circuler même des échantillons de plaintes, des annonces qui ont paru dans les journaux. Si on voulait apporter un lit, on n'aurait pas eu à apporter une brique, mais c'était juste pour renforcer le message, le pourquoi.

Ça fait exactement cinq ans que je siége au conseil, depuis qu'on est amalgamé. Avant, j'entendais parler beaucoup de ces histoires-là, mais les plaintes ne sont pas à mon intention. Depuis que je représente la municipalité de Nipissing Ouest, on a ces plaintes-là qui arrivent régulièrement, comme par exemple la dame qui m'a appelée cette semaine, completely devastated. I did not want to make the decision for them, because I did not want to have it on my conscience.

Why is it like this in West Nipissing, in comparison to Monsieur Arnott's area? West Nipissing is located between Sudbury and North Bay, but we're still unique, because it's a francophone community. The culture is different, an agricultural area. Your seniors were born in the country, accustomed to hard work, farmers and so on. They're still different in that way, so maybe it's the difference in culture and so on that could make a difference, pour être sensibilisé ou pour être capable de s'ancrer dans d'autres communautés avoisinantes.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you very much for your presentation. Merci beaucoup.

This concludes our Sudbury hearings. This committee will resume tomorrow morning at 9 am, hopefully, in Thunder Bay. The committee is adjourned.

*The committee adjourned at 1546.*









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