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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 5 November 2014**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mercredi 5 novembre 2014**

**Standing Committee on  
Estimates**

Ministry of Community  
and Social Services

**Comité permanent des  
budgets des dépenses**

Ministère des Services sociaux  
et communautaires

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Wednesday 5 November 2014

Mercredi 5 novembre 2014

*The committee met at 1557 in room 151.*MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY  
AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Good afternoon, members. We are here to resume consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. There is a total of one hour and 55 minutes remaining.

But before we resume consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, if there are any inquiries from the previous meetings that the ministry or the minister has responses to, perhaps the information can be distributed by the Clerk at the beginning in order to assist the members with any further questions.

Do you have any items, Minister or Ministry?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** We do not.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** When the committee adjourned yesterday, the government had completed its 20-minute rotation, so I will turn the floor over to the opposition for its next 20 minutes. Mr. Hillier.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Minister, for being here today. We have 20 minutes. My questions will be concise and brief, and I would respectfully request that the answers are brief and concise. If you're not able to answer the questions, then we will move on to the next one.

Minister, I was going through the public accounts for 2013. I have counted approximately 770 transfer agencies that your ministry deals with that received funding greater than \$120,000 in 2013-14.

There's also an unknown number of transfer agencies that received monies of less than \$120,000 per year. Could you tell me how many other transfer agencies are part of your ministry, or that your ministry funds, and that receive funds of less than \$120,000 a year?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I'll be turning that question over to the deputy.

**Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky:** Mr. Hillier, I'll have to take that back.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Okay. Could you provide that to the committee afterwards?

**Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky:** Yes.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Minister, a significant portion of your budget is in transfer agencies. That is, by and far, the greatest amount.

I would like to ask you how many employees are tasked within your ministry to monitor and evaluate the efficacy of these transfer agencies.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Certainly, transfer payment agencies are vital to the work that this ministry does, as I'm sure you're aware. Our ministry is basically one of partnerships with many different organizations, as you pointed out.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Do you know how many employees are—

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** We will turn to the people who have the detail, and I'm sure that will be momentarily forthcoming.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Okay.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** We have a list, actually. Do you have a sum total, or would you like to read the list?

**Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky:** Not in terms of governance and oversight, because we have staff, both in corporate offices as well as in the regions, who are involved—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Are any of your employees tasked specifically with monitoring the efficacy of the work that it does and the money that is expended by the transfer agencies?

**Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky:** Yes. The answer is yes. Within our regional offices—and the regional offices span both the Ministry of Community and Social Services programs and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services—we have staff who are program supervisors, responsible for oversight of transfer payment agencies, either in a particular program area or otherwise; as well as people in business units at the regional and corporate level who oversee transfer payment contracting.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** If you could provide that to the committee after, if there is a number that are assigned specifically to that task.

I want to ask now, do these transfer agencies all provide your ministry and your staff with annual reports and/or audited financial statements?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Yes, they do.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** And if a transfer agency fails to provide that, what consequences, if any, are there?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Assistant Deputy Minister Chan?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Sure. We follow up with the agencies around submitting the necessary materials that they

have to submit, and if they don't, we would follow up to try to get those materials from them. If still they don't, then there would be follow-up conversations that would be taken, first of all, with the executive director, obviously, then with the board in order to move through. If there are ongoing issues, we do have the ability, within the agreement, either to do a separate internal audit that we would send staff in to do work on, or we could actually bring another firm in to help us.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Okay. So in your monitoring of these transfer agencies, do you compile and tabulate not only the services that they provide but also the number of people that they provide those services to?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Yes, we do.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Are those public? Are they available to the public, the services that are provided and the number of people that they provide services to?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Yes, they would be available to the public. They're not documents that we keep—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I've never seen them. I've looked for them online, and I've never seen them published at all.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** You're correct; we don't publish them. We are looking at actually being able to do that through a dashboard kind of system in the future, but that's not something that we do right at this moment. But if someone asked for them, they would be provided them.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I ask that question because, of course, there cannot be accountability unless you know what the expected benchmarks are. If we do not know how many people are expected to be provided with services, then there is no way we can measure against and see if we're meeting those objectives.

So you're saying you have that information. You have that information, but the public does not have it.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** It would be available on inquiry.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** On inquiry. Would I have to go through a freedom-of-information request, or would you provide that at no cost to me?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** I would provide that.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Okay. Could we get that for the transfer agencies, please?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Which ones?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** For the 770 of them.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** That would be—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It would be, but just for the last year would be fine. I wouldn't go back for previous years.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I think we'll look into the logistics of that.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I say that to you, Minister, with cause. I'll refer you back: I sent a letter to your predecessor back in 2009 when there were questions of a particular agency—I won't name the agency. That was in 2009, and that agency had not provided or published any annual reports on their activities, their memberships or their financial position since 2005, so it had been four

years. When I sent that letter to your predecessor, it went unactioned.

It does raise some flags about what level of accountability and oversight there is on these transfer agencies, because indeed it is such a substantial amount of the ministry's expenditure.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I'm wondering, Mr. Hillier, if you'd be satisfied with narrowing the search somewhat to perhaps the agency that you're particularly interested in?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** No. No, I believe that it should be public. All agencies should have their annual reports published and available online. I believe that those expectations of how many people they're providing services to and what level of services they're providing should be accessible at all times to all people. That is the only way with such a great number of transfer agencies. Anything less than a full public disclosure is, in effect, no accountability.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Any comments that you might have?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** I can maybe add a few things. Just to take you a bit through the process, first of all, there is a service and a budget submission that comes in. From that submission, all of the key data around the staff, what the service is and the proposal, are all put into a system and they're all looked at. There are standardized templates and parameters. That budget submission comes in. Then there is a contract approval process, where there is a discussion between the ministry person—the program supervisor that we were talking about—with projected levels of outcomes. We look at the expenditures and then that agreement is put in place. Then there's monitoring of payments. Then there's the year-to-date monitoring and reporting. Then, at the end of the cycle, there is a year-end reconciliation.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Let me just—and I can give you some evidence of this later on. I looked at a number of transfer agencies' financial reports that are published online. They list the amount received in transfers from your ministry. They would also recognize any additional revenues—so two lines. Then they would have another line saying “expenses,” and under expenses would be salaries and wages. Then the only other additional line on their financial statement was “other expenses,” which is not a very detailed account.

Four or five lines in a financial statement do not provide any level of accountability. They do not provide any level of oversight. That's what I've seen published online. You're saying to me that the reports, the monitoring and the evaluation that you do in your ministry has far greater detail to it than what is published online?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Yes, that would be correct. I think you're talking about the audited statement that the agency would provide. We do require them to be signed off by an auditor so that we're 100% sure that they're in good shape. So there are two different pieces; that's absolutely correct. You're talking about that piece, then there is the budget submission package that the agencies complete and do, and then our ongoing monitoring, of

which receiving the annual report is one small element—not minuscule and obviously important—of a much larger accountability framework.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** May I request—I'd love to see one of these ministry accountability documents, the evaluation. If it's more practical or more suitable if the names of the organizations are redacted or whatever to respect privacy, that's fine.

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**Ms. Karen Chan:** That would be great.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** But I think it would be beneficial to the committee if we could have one of those, an illustration and example of what the ministry does, provided to us.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Absolutely. That would be fine for us to provide. We can do that.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Madam Chair, on a point of order.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Yes, Mr. Balkissoon?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I would like us to clarify, because Mr. Hillier started out by saying he wanted it for all the agencies. The minister offered a sample—or name a couple of agencies and it will be provided. I think in the line of questioning that I'm hearing Mr. Hillier getting through, really, we're paying a lot of high-priced staff in the ministry—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Is this a point of order or do you just want to get clarification from me?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Yes, I just want to clarify that you're asking for one or two agencies, but not the 700. Because if it's the 700, I think the rest of the committee is not interested in that type of work. I think Mr. Hillier—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** We just spoke about an example.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** —is trying to inject himself as a staff in the ministry. I don't see us, as estimates—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's not a point of order, Chair.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** —having to go into what he's trying to do. I ask you to rule.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** So the monitoring and the evaluation, you'll provide an example or representative examples if there may be other types of monitoring surveys that you do for different transfer agencies?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I think we'd better wait for the Chair to rule.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** We're in the middle—I'm asking you, on a point of order—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Well, it's not a point of order.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Yes, it is.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** This isn't a point of order; it's a point of clarification.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I just want to make sure, because if it's all the agencies, I think it's an unusual request. For all the years I've been—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I just said, and there was an agreement, that—

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Can I finish?

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Hold on. Whoa, whoa, whoa. This is a point of clarification—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Let's go to recess. If the member needs—

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Excuse me; I'm speaking. This is a point of clarification. If you would like the member to clarify his request, then that is exactly what he can please do. Thank you. Please go ahead, Mr. Hillier.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** We were understanding, on the monitoring and the evaluation, a representation that illustrates what you do. I did ask earlier about the financial statements and audits that you said you would provide. When I put in the 770, there were some eyebrows raised, so a couple of them would be fine.

Just for clarification, as well, could you provide the committee with a list of the other transfer agencies that are not identified and who receive transfer payments of less than \$120,000 per year?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** So in summary, you want a list of the transfer payment agencies receiving less than \$120,000.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** You want to receive a couple of examples of audited financial statements, and also the process by which we examine those.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** There is a risk assessment also done, I believe.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** That's right; there is.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** So I think we can look into providing—

**Ms. Karen Chan:** We could provide you the transfer payment package, the risk assessment tool, all of those things we do as follow-up throughout the year. We could provide that—the tools, basically—if that would work.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes, thank you. And you know, this ought not to come as any surprise. The Ombudsman has mentioned as well that there is a significant amount of bureaucracy. I think they stated that it was too much bureaucracy and not enough service. I'm sure every member here in this committee and every member of the Legislature has heard and seen stories directly of people needing services—very needy people requiring services, whether it be developmental services or they have intellectual disabilities that require services. It's a broad spectrum. We often hear that there is no money, even though we are over the \$10-billion range in expenses, with the bulk of that going to transfer agencies, and no public—or very, very little public—disclosure about what these transfer agencies are doing.

So I think I'll put this in as a request, Minister, because again, as we go through these estimates and as an individual goes through the public accounts—

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Two minutes.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** —it would be much more effective for all members of the Legislature and far more effective for all members of the public to be able to easily wade through the ministry if these reports and these evaluations were made public.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Mr. Hillier, I just want to clarify. Of our \$10-billion-plus budget, the vast majority of those funds go to the mandatory social assistance programs. They go direct to front line.

Your points in relation to bureaucracy and so on, I am assured by my officials that we are trying to streamline as much as we can. We totally want our budgetary dollars to go to those in need. That is the essence of our ministry.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** What I was referring to there is, bureaucracy does not just happen with the Ontario public service or with the Ontario Legislature; it happens everywhere. Even transfer agencies can have inefficient bureaucracies. Again, without being able to evaluate or see the numbers, each and every one of the ones that I've looked at do not list detailed expenditures, just these other expenditures—which often will be in the neighbourhood of 20%, 25%, 30% of their transfer fees that they are receiving from you, which are being spent in “other expenses.” Certainly the great bulk of the money that is being transferred is going off into salaries and wages and benefits for those people providing those services, but a fairly substantial amount is also being expended under that “other” category.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Thank you, Mr. Hillier. We'll now move on to the third party and Ms. Forster.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Good afternoon, Minister. Thank you for your responses yesterday.

We have a number of people in the audience here today that I'd like to introduce. One is Ruth Westcott, who is here all the way from Thunder Bay. She's a member of the ODSP Action Coalition in the Thunder Bay area. She's also a member of Poverty Free Thunder Bay. She came to speak to me today, and I think she's going to try and speak to some other MPPs while she's here, in particular her own MPPs in Thunder Bay, about the medical review process and its impact, particularly on people with mental health issues.

One of the issues that she did raise for me was that these 12-page forms that we talked about yesterday, for the review assessments, don't explain to physicians what the legislative test is for them to actually have continued benefits. It really puts people at a disadvantage, particularly if they don't have a family doctor who is known to them, or they are known to their doctor—to complete these medical reviews when they don't even know what the criteria are to have that approval done.

As well today, we have seven members of OPSEU who are in the developmental services sector who support clients in our communities. They are: Patti Markland, Erin Smith-Rice, David Lalonde, Silvana Cacciatore-Roy, Karen McKinnon, Scott Collins and Tracy More. I welcome them all here to committee.

I want to spend my time maybe going back to the developmental services sector for a short period of time. Once again, we only have a very few minutes so I'm going to ask some questions, and if you can't immediately answer them, then if you can get back to us—

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** We can do our best to immediately answer them. That's why we're all here.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** All right. Yesterday, Mr. Walker from the official opposition asked if you would provide wait-list data, which I think you confirmed you would do. I just wanted to clarify that request.

I wanted to ask you to provide the following: How many Ontarians, according to your department, have a developmental disability? How many of those individuals receive direct funding, direct services, and how many receive no support from your department? What is the current number of Ontarians waiting for support needs assessments, and can you—

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Could we just do them one at a time? Because I really think the answers are here, and my head's beginning to spin.

1620

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Sure, if you can answer quickly.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Those with developmental disabilities in Ontario—I believe it's in the order of some 65,000. I'm ready to stand corrected. We have a pictorial here. Is it approximately 65,000?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Approximately 62,000.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Approximately 62,000.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** That's 62,000 that are actually interacting with your departments?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** That's 62,000 adults—

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Adults.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** —not interacting; 62,000 adults who have a developmental disability. About 40,000 of those have some kind of interaction with us.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** How many receive direct funding or direct services?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Do you mean direct funding through Passport? I think you do.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** I think that's what you mean. About 16,000.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** So that means that about 50,000 receive no support at all?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Well, don't forget that 70% of the people who we have interaction with are on ODSP.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** That's right. Of the 62,000, the high majority of those, almost 99%, are getting ODSP. There are about 18,000 who get residential services, about 16,000 who get Passport services, and another group—I'll have to get you that number—who get day support services, as well.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** What is the current number of Ontarians waiting for support needs assessments?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Waiting for assessments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** For assessments.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** I'm sorry; I don't have the number waiting for assessments.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** You can provide that for us?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** We can get you that.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** And can you provide it by region? Is it possible to break it down?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** It would be by DSO.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Okay, because according to the select committee's report, there were 8,000 people, at the time that that report was done, on the wait-list, and we hear from our stakeholders that there's a wait-list to get on the wait-list.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Can I just maybe say a couple of things about that?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Sure.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** As part of the \$811-million investment, we have increased the number of assessors. There are some who are already out there, and they'll be increased in a second wave. They do need to be trained; training is completed for one set, so we're actually increasing the number of people that we can get through assessments, and we'll be doing more training and increasing more.

There's a capacity issue in us being able to make sure that we get the right number trained, so that we can get them in and get them into service, so we are anticipating that we'll be able to really increase the number of individuals who have been—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Oh, there are about 14,000 waiting for assessments, so we do have the answer for that.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Good.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Can I just say that, for the services that we're providing, through both Passport and residential services, we are servicing those most in need. Anybody who comes forward—any one of these 14,000, or individuals we might know about with an urgent need—are absolutely assessed immediately. If they're in need of immediate or urgent services, they are receiving those. Somebody could be waiting on a waiting list for services or waiting for an assessment if any of those things happen.

For the folks who we're bringing on right now, we're doing it based on those most in need for Passport and for residential.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** What is your projected target for wait times for support needs assessments from that wait-list?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** For the assessments? Well, once we get everybody fully onboard—I'd like to get back to you on that.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Okay. How much funding, if any, will be provided to DSOs directly in this fiscal year to reduce wait times?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** There is money that has gone directly to the DSOs.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Do we know how much that is?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** I do, if you can just give me a couple of minutes. Why don't you keep going? Maybe I'll know some of the answers.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** All right. I'll keep going.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** I'll come back to that one.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Okay. Are you committed to eliminating the wait-lists for support needs assessments?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Yes.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Yes.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** And you're going to give me the time frame? Okay.

How many are currently on the Passport wait-list?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** The Passport wait-list is—tell me the Passport figures. I just need to get that.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I have that somewhere.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Did any individuals who were waiting—

**Ms. Karen Chan:** It's 13,000.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** What is it?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** It's 13,000.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thirteen thousand. Did any individuals who were waiting for Passport lose their eligibility as a result of the new guidelines that were implemented on October 1?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Not that I'm aware of. In fact, the guidelines were increased so that more individuals could get services, and more services were made available. I think as you know, respite was added in relatively recently, and we have actually expanded services now to allow people to be more included. An example would be somebody who wants to participate in a recreation program, somebody who wants to participate in a day program, and they need some supports to do that. They can get those supports.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** So is this \$810 million going to end the Passport wait-list over the next three years?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Yes. The next four years was the commitment for Special Services at Home, too.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** We're working as hard as we can to accelerate that.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** But it's only for current people, right? It's for the current numbers.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** No, we've included—

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** There's a contingency.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** —estimating about 1,000 new in every year, which is, I would say, maybe even a little bit high, so I think we have lots of room. We are working as quickly as we can to get through both the SSAH wait-list and the Passport wait-list. At this time, we're a bit ahead of schedule, and we'll continue to try to work hard.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** How many people are currently on the SSAH wait-list?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** The SSAH wait-list was 8,000—

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Eight thousand.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** —and we've already brought in 6,900.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Is there kind of a regional range of wait times?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** I'm sorry; 6,000.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Six thousand.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Let me correct: 6,000.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** It was 6,900, was it not?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** It's 6,000 from SSAH and 1,900 in Passport, for a total of 7,900, and 6,000 is of the 8,000.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Okay. Is that wait-list anticipated to be ended as well, under this funding?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Yes, both.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** And there is some contingency for new people?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** For SSAH, we have some contingency. We have that already built into the system.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** How many people are currently waiting for residential services?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** About 12,000.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** What is the regional range of wait times? I hear that it can be, in one region, anywhere from several months to several years.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** To talk about the residential waiting list, the interesting part about that is that it includes people who might think they need a residential placement in a year, sometimes in 10 years, sometimes in 20 years. So we're doing some work on that waiting list to try to actually discern the individuals—we know we're getting the people most in need through the SIS. We know that right now.

What we can't really discern at this very moment, but what we're working to discern, is, once you get past the urgent, when is it people think they might need a placement? Is it a group home? What kind of residential environment do they think would be best for them?

We're trying to work on that 12,000 to try to figure out what are the kinds of opportunities, matching that up with the work we're doing on the housing task force. Some people might be interested in independent supportive housing. Some people might be interested in some wraparound services. Some people might be interested in host families. Some people might need some more specialized kinds of services that we may need to think about putting in place—for instance, somebody with a dual diagnosis or somebody who has high health needs. We have that range, so we're trying to work to discern that 12,000.

The 12,000 came from—you'll know that we moved to the DSO system not that long ago, so some of those people who are waiting came and were grandfathered in from the community agencies where they would have been on waiting lists, maybe for years. We're working on bringing them in and actually doing the work with them so that we can actually plan for the future when we're looking at longer-term residential planning.

1630

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** What is the annual caseload increase on the wait-list for Passport special services residential respite? Is it like a 10% increase per year? Is it—

**Ms. Karen Chan:** For Passport?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** For all of the programs that are administered.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** As far as the increase in the wait-list? Well, we know, for example, about 1,000 people with developmental disabilities turn into being an adult every year; we know that. That's why I said when I looked at Passport, we maybe even overestimated there. So we're looking to try to work backwards in the system, working with our colleagues in MCYS particularly around the individuals who were in child welfare and particularly those individuals with complex special needs

so that we can actually start to plan and work forward that way.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Five or six minutes.

Within your \$810-million budget, are there transitional plans for employees who are working front line in the sector? I mean, we heard about a lot of things that are going to change over the next three or four years. Certainly there is a fear out there that—already, the direct service providers are seeing reductions in their hours of work, particularly in the part-time sector.

Are there transition plans to perhaps move some of these people into other areas within the developmental services sector as things change?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Right at the moment, most of the individuals who are employed within the sector are providing direct services, the high majority within a group home environment.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Right.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** At this stage, we are obviously bringing on new individuals every year. We've already exceeded this year's capacity by more than 350 individuals who we're transitioning into homes, starting this month. So we don't see the number of group homes that we've got right now decreasing. We may see that they need to make some changes and adjustments to particularly service some of our individuals who have these specialized needs. This year, we've actually provided some support and additional staffing to help support some of those individuals with specialized needs.

As far as the Passport money goes, we've been talking with our agencies around the fact that they are the trusted partners. They're the folks in the field who individuals and families trust. How can they then support individuals who are coming to them with their Passport money? How can they support them with the staff that they have?

Just like we moved from—you know, staff worked in an institutional environment to more staff worked in group homes. Are there more needs for staff to support people in the community so that we can support inclusion?

Many of our agencies are taking up that challenge and are working together with their staff, because it is important that we have qualified, trained developmental services workers.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thank you. What is the current denial rate, where applicants apply for benefits and are deemed ineligible, initially? Do we have any sense of those numbers?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** For ODSP or for Passport?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Yes, for ODSP, or applicants for developmental services ineligible for support. I'm thinking through programs—

**Ms. Karen Chan:** So somebody who doesn't meet the criteria—

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Yes.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** I'm sorry, I don't know what the—it's quite low.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** Can you repeat the question? I'm sorry—



**Ms. Cindy Forster:** What is the current denial rate where applicants for developmental services are deemed to be ineligible for support?

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** For ODSP specifically you're asking.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** No, I think it's more the Passport—

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Sorry; thank you. We just want to clarify. I can tell you, it's quite low.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** And for ODSP?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** I need to look to one of my colleagues.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** We wouldn't be able to answer that question specifically. For ODSP, it's not whether or not you are an individual with a developmental disability; it's whether or not that developmental disability meets the definition within the Ontario Disability Support Program Act for a person with a disability. That's a challenging question to actually respond to, but there is a very large number of individuals with developmental disabilities who access ODSP income support.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Are we able to get that data? Do you collect that data?

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** On denial?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** On denial.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** No, I don't think we would be able to provide that information down to that level of detail. We could certainly provide you with what is the non-grant rate for people who apply to ODSP but not necessarily for the reason that they were found not to have a developmental disability, simply they were not found to have a disability.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** I'll just check with my colleague back here that we can provide that now. We'll look to see if we can get that from our DSO offices.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** You've promised \$200 million over three years for front-line workers. How much of that wage enhancement is actually for the service workers, and how much is for intervenors, interpreters or other workers who may be hired to implement this new programming?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** My understanding is that the whole \$200 million over three years will support front-line workers in all the agencies that support vulnerable people. Some of that money will go to intervenor services. Some will go to our Aboriginal Health and Wellness Strategy workers. This is not specifically developmental services.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Thank you, Minister. We will now move to the government side. I believe it will be Mr. Rinaldi.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Minister, good to be here; it's wonderful to be here today. The question I have sort of follows the member of the NDP, the trend she was going to—and I see some of the people who are here in the audience today.

We talk about programs, and we talk about what we can do. Sometimes we don't talk enough about the front-line workers because they're really the backbone, especially of your ministry. I wouldn't want to single them out, but they're the ones who take the load. I hope that, as we move forward, we don't forget about these people. I think it's very important. Like I said, they're the ones who do the slugging.

I wonder if you can give us a bit of an overview—I'm not sure we need a lot of detail—as we move forward, on how we're supporting these front-line workers. For two reasons: One is that I want to recognize the important work that they do for that particular sector, but also to attract people to do that because sometimes it's not very rewarding, and maybe it's not very appreciated, and a number of other factors. If you could give us a bit of an overview, I would certainly appreciate it.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you, Mr. Rinaldi. Yes, welcome to our visitors.

As I mentioned yesterday, I've just been so impressed by DSWs, in particular, working in Community Living agencies. When I was down in Chatham, where I visited, I was asking some of the workers in a group home how long they had worked at the home. I was really surprised. It was 10 years, 15 years—really dedicated individuals. Of course, in our budget, the \$200 million over three years is to go to front-line workers.

Actually, in response to Ms. Forster's question, we do have a breakdown of the \$200 million: \$20.2 million will go to the community services that I mentioned—intervenor, violence against women, aboriginal health and wellness—and some \$179.8 million will go directly to the developmental services sector.

Obviously, we respect the collective bargaining process, and we're working with employers and unions to discuss an approach that will lead to these funds being dedicated to those front-line workers.

**1640**

I think maybe I'll hand it over to ADM Karen Chan, because she's intimately involved in how we're going to be deploying these funds.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Great. Thank you.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Karen?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Thank you, Minister. As Mr. Rinaldi and the minister said, the workers who support our vulnerable individuals are really important.

This has been an absolutely excellent sector that has worked together around developing a human resources strategy and has looked at competencies and training, and they have worked across union, non-union and employer groups. So they have a long history of working together, in partnership with the ministry, to ensure that the competencies are in place. We're very proud of that, and we're very proud of the work that has been done across the province.

As far as the \$200 million over the three years that has been invested, you've heard the breakdown. We have been meeting over the past few months with representatives from our union colleagues and representatives from

our employer group, both unionized and non-unionized. These discussions have been facilitated by the Ministry of Labour.

We do know that a lot—many, most—of the contracts are looking for renewal. We do know that this \$200-million investment is absolutely essential to support individuals in the workforce, to support the agencies so that they can provide the supports that staff need and to help us move forward with both the investment and the transformation strategy.

To that end, next week, we have two days of meetings planned. We'll work with a group of folks who represent the employers and folks here who represent two of our major collective bargaining agents.

We're hoping to work on a methodology, together in the room, on the allocation, of course meeting the direction and the criteria, and a reporting methodology for that. So how would we allocate the funds to best meet the needs, and how can we move forward? We hope that that can be shared. We'll start out with some shared principles that we'll talk about and then move forward, to recognize that the ministry is not the employer at all—they're individual employers—and that there are individual collective bargaining arrangements that go on across the province.

I'm very pleased that both our labour partners and our agency partners are coming to the table in good faith to have that discussion. I'm very much looking forward to those two days of discussions that we have and being able to move that forward, because we do know it's urgent that people understand how that money will go out, and so that we can move forward with the bargaining process and actually move forward with the transformation in investment.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** If I might just add a comment: I think that's an innovative approach, that you sit around the table before a decision is made. But I would encourage you, whatever that outcome is—and I'm hopeful it's very successful to all parties concerned—to communicate that—

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** —because I think that's so important to the recipients of those services, knowing that there's harmony and that they're going to keep on getting their services.

Many times, whichever way the discussion goes, we tend to forget who the ultimate recipient of the service is and how it's going to impact them. I just want to encourage you to make sure, through those discussions around the table, that we don't forget about the people that we're really trying to serve. Thank you.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** And I would say that all parties are coming with that in mind, so thank you very much.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Go ahead, Ms. Wong.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Minister, as you know, both Mr. Balkissoon and I sat on the select committee, and the number one recommendation in the select committee deals specifically with the creation of the new inter-

ministerial committee on developmental services. The nature of the program and the people you are trying to serve in your ministry require that interaction with a number of ministries, so can you share with the committee the efforts that have been taken by your ministry in terms of removing the barriers and then bringing together the multiple ministries? Can you share that with the committee?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Yes, certainly. I certainly understand the spirit of those first few recommendations of the select committee's report urging interministerial work and the potential for ministers to sit around the table, some 10 ministers.

On further analysis, we found that to be somewhat unwieldy. We would prefer to have groups address specific areas that are really important and that are mentioned throughout the select committee report.

One of the most important is this whole issue of transition planning. There was a question related to that this morning in question period, as you'll recall, and it's certainly something Ms. Jones had mentioned previously in the House as being very difficult, for a family with a child who is going to school, who is receiving a lot of supports, approaching adulthood, to plan for that transition.

So in your mandate letter from me, which is available online, Ms. Wong has now been directed to work particularly on a number of these interministerial events. The critical one that I have just been talking about is, of course, working with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to ensure that young people transition as smoothly as possible into adulthood in terms of even having the availability of competitive employment. So you are going to be very busy, because there are many different other aspects as well.

The select committee mentioned the whole issue of supported decision-making. The law commission is coming out with some guidelines there, and this would require interaction with the Ministry of the Attorney General. There are many different aspects. There's the partnership council that is under Minister Duguid, the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Under that employment piece, he has established that council, and of course we know that it's vital that those with disabilities, whether acquired or developmental, have the opportunity to acquire the type of training they may need, supports, whatever that looks like, and also, on the other side, to encourage employers to actually employ individuals. So you are going to be particularly busy.

But we also know that at the ministerial level, at the bureaucratic level, there is a deputy ministers' committee that includes, I think, those 10 ministries and that is working to coordinate, because it obviously is absolutely vital that we work across ministries for this vulnerable population, and that is our intention. We need to. We don't want people falling through the cracks.

I'm not sure—ADM Chan, would you like to expand on interministerial work at all?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Sure, I can add. There is a deputies' committee and then there is also an assistant deputies' committee, and it's actually quite an exciting committee because it includes both people who are interested in doing policy, which is some of our longer-term work, and program, and below that there are working groups working on some particular projects.

One of the successes of that ADM group is actually the memorandum of understanding that has been signed by all the boards of education across the province, which is very, very exciting, to put in place transition planning, and working with our children's ministry and then with MCSS as well.

**1650**

I think it's the first time that I know of in my career where we're assured—there was a lot of activity that went on in local communities for sure; I wouldn't want to put that aside—but where we have one consistent approach across the province that all boards of education have signed onto. That in and of itself is exciting. That transition planning will start earlier—page 15—so that we can actually think about the wants and needs, whether the individual wants to continue on in school, some kind of training, or whether they are an individual with higher needs that we may need to think about. That's very exciting.

The other work that we've been doing is some work with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on some of their new investments. Their investments are planned for at the local level around housing. We've created environments where we've shared that with both our local delivery agents and with our regional offices so that they can interact at the local level around housing needs.

A third example we're working on which I think is quite exciting is with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. That's dealing with some of our most complex vulnerable individuals, some of whom are in hospitals, some who are at home with very high levels of service, and looking at how we can actually bring together the services of health and our own to meet the needs of the client.

In each of our regional offices across the province over the last six months, there have been individual meetings between the LHINs and our regional office directors. In every single community that has happened. They are putting in place some action plans individually. We have a working group of LHINs and our regional directors and ADMs across the two ministries, children and MCSS, that is also working on some plans as they relate to some local communities.

One success I can tell you about is in Ottawa, where there were a lot of individuals who were in some hospitals. The community came together with the LHIN and planned for about 11 or 12 individuals, who had been in hospital, some up to and over five years—to actually bring them into the community. That was only done

because we were able to bring together the health funding through CCAC and the MCSS funding, sometimes making some physical plant changes, but then being able to bring those individuals into the community. That's one success that's happening in all of our regions across the province.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Ms. Kiwala.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you very much for all of your work so far, to everybody in the committee. It's been most interesting.

Another welcome to our guests. I'm always interested to meet with you, and hopefully we'll have a chance to meet front-line workers at some stage. It is close to where I've come from.

I wanted to talk to you a little bit today in the realm of community services. This ministry also provides funding to the aboriginal community. As you're aware from my motion to ask the federal government for a national inquiry for the missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, this is an area that I've taken quite a keen interest in. I'm wondering if you can explain to me more about the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy and how the funding is assisting this population.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you for that. In fact, the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy does fund a wide range of health and family healing programs that are aboriginal designed, delivered and managed. This year, 2014, actually marks the 20th anniversary of what is called AHWS. I'm going to be in Thunder Bay actually—

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Two minutes left, Minister; two minutes.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I will be in Thunder Bay, so hopefully I will meet with some of our guests here today, because I'm going up to mark that 20th anniversary with them. We'll do a visit to Community Living Thunder Bay, which I'm also looking forward to a great deal.

The mandate is essentially to reduce family violence and violence against aboriginal women and children and to improve aboriginal healing, health and wellness through culturally appropriate programs and services. We have funded this through our ministry. There are other ministries involved. The total funding for these AHWS programs is some \$38 million in this fiscal year.

I'm going to turn it over to Erin Hannah for the last few moments here, because I know she has some in-depth information.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** Just adding to the minister's comments already: It may be of interest to you that, in 2013-14, there were about 42,000 people who accessed AHWS programming. Through the funding that we've provided, we've also managed to create 650 jobs in aboriginal communities, which I think is a great success rate.

Moving away a little bit from AHWS, I just wanted to flag that the ministry has other partnerships with our First Nations and aboriginal partners, notably the delivery of

Ontario Works in 101 First Nations communities across the province, for which we provide program delivery funding in the amount of about \$24 million and work very closely with them on the unique realities of on-reserve communities, particularly in the far north and remote fly-in communities.

The other programming that we have in partnership with our First Nations communities is the transitional support fund. It came into being when there was a consolidation of homelessness programs—

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Thank you.

We're now going to move into the final round. It will be 18 minutes per caucus. We will begin with the official opposition, and Mr. Hillier.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Minister, I'm going to move over to some ODSP questions now. I would like to say, I've read some MCSS documents that indicate that on average, there is a 1.2% reduction of people from ODSP per year. The document reads, "Recipients exit primarily due to death." There are very, very few people who actually move off ODSP into employment. Of course, that is one of the responsibilities, one of the objectives of ODSP: to assist people to get off and become employed. So 1.2% is not a very large number of people getting off ODSP each year. You've also only increased the employment assistance portion of ODSP this year by \$5 million where you've increased the financial assistance portion of ODSP by \$307 million.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Could you just clarify where you're finding these numbers in the estimates book? Or is this somewhere else?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'll do that in a second, Minister.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Okay. We just want to keep with your numbers here.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** In your estimates, you have ODSP financial assistance increasing by \$307 million and employment assistance rising by only \$5 million. With such a low rate of transition, 1.2%—first off, let me ask, is 1.2% a benchmark that you're satisfied with? That's been the average over the last number of years since 2003.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I'm going to turn this over to Richard Steele—

**Mr. Richard Steele:** I think Erin would be better for that question.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** To Erin? Okay. Erin?

**Mr. Richard Steele:** I'm happy to take it.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** So many experts.

**Mr. Richard Steele:** I'm happy to do it as well.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** Tag, you're it.

Thank you for the question. Certainly, we're quite aware that in the Ontario Disability Support Program, the two primary reasons that people exit the program are, first, turning 65 and being able to access federal old age security and other benefits for seniors, and the second reason is due to death. Our employment outcomes may seem low from an exit standpoint, but I think what I would point your attention to is that we have had some success in encouraging more people receiving ODSP to

have earnings from employment. It doesn't necessarily mean that they can no longer access any income support through the program, but we do have about 10% of cases reporting job earnings in the program, which does then reduce the level of assistance that they receive.

**1700**

We don't always have individuals in ODSP who necessarily are in a position to be able to have full-time work where they are able to earn sufficient moneys in order to leave the program. I think we absolutely do think we can do a better job, though.

A lot of our efforts in terms of our social assistance reform agenda are aimed at trying to improve how we provide those supports.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** So you're saying at the present time about 10% of the people are receiving employment earnings outside of ODSP?

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** Correct.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** And that we have a 1.2% exit from ODSP, mostly due to CPP at age 65 and/or death?

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** The two primary reasons for it, yes.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Knowing that, it causes me some concern that you've only increased the employment assistance by \$5 million, knowing that you have a very low employment assistance number. It causes me a great deal of concern that you've only increased the employment assistance by \$5 million. I wonder if—

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** So are you advocating for more? Is this what you—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** If I was only having a 10% success rate, I would question what I'm doing, whether or not the money is providing any benefit and if we ought not to be doing things in a structurally different way to get greater numbers of people actually having some employment earnings other than ODSP as their sole source of income.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** Yes. There are a few points that I just wanted to share with you. I'm not sure exactly what page you're referring to in the estimates in terms of the \$5 million that you're quoting.

Ontario Works employment assistance, though, is different than Ontario Disability Support Program employment supports. They have different funding lines. I just want to make sure that I'm clear on that.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes. We'll get to the OW after.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** What we've done in the ODSP world and actually also in the Ontario Works world is recently introduced, in 2013, a \$200 flat rate earnings exemption. That did increase expenditures because it means that people can continue to receive disability support while they're going to work.

It was actually intended to be an incentive for people to not be fearful of joining the labour market to the best of their ability. We're still evaluating the impact that that will have in terms of incenting more employment. It has only been in place for a year and a half.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** If you want to look at your results-based—it's on page 8 where you'll see the On-

tario Works employment assistance this year. Then if you go to public accounts you can see employment assistance last year was \$183 million and this year in your estimates it's \$195 million—on page 8.

Anyway, I still want to go back. We've actually seen not any improvement in these numbers over the years, but actually a reduction in the amount of people that we're assisting in getting greater earnings from employment instead of just ODSP.

What do you say to that statement that we were actually flat or in decline, getting more people receiving employment earnings?

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** I just want to go back to clarify. The amount that you're citing in terms of increases to employment assistance, that is not the Ontario Disability Support Program; it's the Ontario Works program. ODSP has not, in the employment supports program, actually had an increase. The envelope remains the same.

Where we've focused our efforts in terms of trying to support better employment outcomes for people with disabilities has been in the area of introducing policy change, like the \$200 flat rate exemption, as well as—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Could you just go back? Did you say there has been no increase in employment assistance under the ODSP project?

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** There has been no increase in the envelope that is specifically the employment supports program in ODSP. I would say that the investment choices that have been made, based on the ministry looking at how we can best incent outcomes, have been to make policy changes like the \$200 flat rate earnings exemption that's intended to better support people and reduce the fear of moving into the job market for people who are receiving ODSP.

There are also other changes that have been made: for example, allowing ODSP recipients to be able to continue to access health benefits through the Ontario Disability Support Program when they go to work and if they exit to a job, until such time as those benefits are available through their employer.

There's a number of different ways, through the policy tools that we have, that we've tried to encourage that—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Okay. I'm just going to table a couple of sheets here with the Clerk. They can drop them over to you, and you can tell me if that's correct or not.

I still want to go back. Minister, do you think that what your ministry is accomplishing on this is an acceptable level? Are you satisfied with what your ministry is accomplishing on both of those two functions: assisting people to get off ODSP and get full employment, or helping them get some gainful employment?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I think we are taking the matter very seriously, and we're looking at all possible ways of getting individuals on ODSP into competitive employment. There's no question that some of the incentives that Erin has talked about will make a difference.

I'm confident that people will have the desire to earn that little bit extra, the \$200 that they can keep—over the \$200, they keep 50%—because of the benefits of being

part of the workforce. Again, we've seen that this is very important. Where employers have accepted individuals with disabilities into the workforce, they're very pleased. But there is an issue with employers—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Okay. Remember my original thing. We were going to keep the questions and the answers as brief as possible.

Minister, I'm going to go to the next question here—

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I enjoy brevity, but I do think that these are important points to make, Mr. Hillier.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Minister, in 2013-14, your ministry paid out \$229 million in salaries. This year, your estimates are increased to \$241 million, roughly an \$11-million increase. How many new employees have you hired at MCSS?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I will turn that to perhaps the deputy.

**Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky:** Our approved hiring level is about—I believe it is about 47 above what we had last year.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** That's 47 new—

**Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky:** That's 47 FTEs—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** New employees.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:**—given the fact that we are putting some additional resources into the medical review function to—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Okay. That's very necessary. That's an abysmal state for anybody applying for ODSP right now. You cannot get an answer; you will not get an answer for at least a year. It's totally inappropriate, in my view, from my experience.

I do want to ask you—you've got 47 new employees, but I also noticed that over the last four years, the number of people employed in MCSS who are now on the sunshine list has increased by 80 employees. It has doubled in the last four years.

It certainly appears to me that whereas there may not be funds for what you've said in employment assistance envelopes, there certainly doesn't seem to be a shortage of funds for increasing employees' wages to get onto the sunshine list.

**Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky:** I can't speak to the specifics of the changes in numbers on the sunshine list. I can tell you that the vast majority of our employees are represented by bargaining units or are involved in front-line services, most particularly the Ontario Disability Support Program.

Our senior management group across—at this point in time, we have just under 3,500 employees—is under 2%, so we do keep our senior management ranks as small as we can.

We do have policy specialists and others who are involved in some of the policy development work that we've talked about. They constitute about 20% of our workforce. But the vast majority of our staff are front-line staff.

1710

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I want to ask you a question, Minister, on Ontario Works because we see a very similar

trend line with people going on Ontario Works, which is meant to be a temporary program and to assist people to find gainful employment and not be on OW. But I see that in the last two years, there has only been a reduction of 0.8% in those new cases. So 99% of the people who have gone on OW in the last two years remain on OW to this day. That is again—

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** No. They are different people. In other words, I think about 50% of OW clients get off OW within a year.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's 50%? Okay, I'll take a look into that.

I would ask as well, Minister—going through the estimates, there have been a couple of programs that have been of great interest to me. That is the Passport Program and the community support services for adults. These do not show up as separate line items in the estimates, and it's very difficult to see how those programs are being utilized and the efficacy of those programs. I know a couple of years ago, when I first requested from the ministry the information on the Passport Program, there were, I believe, 243 people on the waiting list for it, but there were no funds at all that year. That's going back to 2009.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** It's a long time ago, Mr. Hillier.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Minister, do you not think it would be good and proper and valuable for the Legislative Assembly to have separate line items in your estimates and in the public accounts showing these different programs so that we can see changes or alterations? These are important programs. These are meant to help people who have significant disabilities. But it's very opaque as to the effectiveness of them or any investigation or evaluation of them if we can't see how much is being spent on those programs from year to year.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I'm sure the estimates are produced in the way that the Ministry of Finance has determined previously. I think we can give you some more detail if you want to know the envelope for Passport funding, if that's what your question is.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** That would be helpful, but I do want to go back to the question to you. As the minister who has responsibility and authority for your ministry—and of course, you cannot do things that are contrary to the Ministry of Finance in the development of your estimates; however, in the interest of openness and transparency—I hope that would not be contrary to the Ministry of Finance—that you actually itemize in a separate line item the funding for these important programs like Passport and the support services program.

If you have the number of what you're funding for Passport this year, I would be happy to hear that number, as well as your response about including that as separate line items in future estimates.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** It's an interesting idea and certainly something I will be considering.

And the actual amount?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** The base amount is \$108 million, and it's growing this year by about \$20 million—this year.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** So \$108 million in Passport funding.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** Yes, and growing this year by \$20 million with the new investment—this year's investment.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** The \$108 million, that was 2013-14?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** That's correct.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** And we're looking at \$128 million in Passport funding. What about the community support services for adults?

**Ms. Karen Chan:** I don't have that broken down in here, the community support services.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Again, we're here to examine and try to identify that the taxpayer is receiving benefit for their money. If things—

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Thank you, Mr. Hillier. Your time is up. We'll move on to the third party and Ms. Forster.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Minister, you're eliminating the Work-Related Benefit. I was concerned yesterday about some of the things that you didn't say in your opening remarks. There didn't seem to be an emphasis on social assistance reform and the basic need for income security and income adequacy. It appears that you're taking about \$40 million of benefits that provide a steady income stream of \$100 a month to people who have employment income and re-purposing that money to assist people who are not yet working. In other words, you're taking away money from one group to support another, when both groups actually need assistance.

It appears that you're punishing people on ODSP who are engaging in exactly the activity that you want them to engage in, which is to go to work, if they're able to do that, by taking away that \$100 a month in income. These are people with disabilities. If they were able to work more, if they were able to work at a level to support themselves, they wouldn't be on ODSP in the first place.

I think this is going to be really problematic for some people, those for whom work is more about getting out in the community and making a contribution in their community than it is about increasing incomes. It's problematic that the ministry doesn't support people working at whatever level they are able to. ODSP really should be a program that supports part-time work, intermittent work or casual work, because it's a program that supports people with disabilities. As we know, there are some people with disabilities for whom full-time work will never be an option.

What are they supposed to do when they lose that \$100-a-month Work-Related Benefit? They're already living in poverty and now we're going to take that away from them.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I'm going to have to disagree with the premise of your question. We're streamlining seven employment benefits into one. The total funding envelope for those seven employment benefits that were

previously there are going to be redeployed—every penny of that money is going to be redeployed. We're doing it in a way that we think best assists individuals, both on OW and ODSP.

I'm going to turn over some of the details of what this actually means for individuals to Ms. Hannah.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** We've been told by ODSP recipients who earn \$100 a month that they've been told they're going to lose \$1,200 per year in the Work-Related Benefit—I mean, directly from them. They've told us, "No government has ever cut my benefits like this." The new consolidated benefit will mean a significant cut for those people currently getting \$1,200 a year. Can you tell us the projections you've prepared regarding the number of current recipients of the Work-Related Benefit who are projected to lose funding under the new consolidated benefits program and any fiscal savings that you're projecting through the new consolidated employment benefit?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Ms. Hannah?

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** Thank you. As the minister noted, the move towards streamlining the existing Employment-Related Benefit is not a cost-saving exercise. It's very much related to doing a better job of supporting employment goals for people with disabilities as well as other individuals within both Ontario Works and ODSP who do not have disabilities.

A little bit of context that I think might be helpful in terms of the streamlined employment benefit approach: The minister mentioned already that we'll be replacing seven existing benefits; four of those are in Ontario Works and three are in ODSP, including the Work-Related Benefit that you've mentioned, Ms. Forster.

Our goal is, first off, to simplify the myriad rules surrounding those seven existing benefits. One of the ongoing concerns that we have heard over the years related to social assistance is that we have far too many rules that make it really complicated for people to understand what benefits are available to them to support whether it's employment goals or whether it's to support emergency needs around health benefits or health care.

We've made the decision that we absolutely should have a single benefit within each of the programs that delineates not on the basis of whether you receive ODSP or Ontario Works, but on the basis of whether or not you're a person with a disability or a person who does not have a disability. The new employment benefit approach will actually have a benefit of up to \$1,800 annually for an individual with a disability, to support their employment goals.

1720

An important distinction in terms of the policy change that this will represent is that right now, the Work-Related Benefit, for example—and you noted it—is only available to people who have some level of earnings that they report. There's no access to that for individuals who are trying to enhance or strengthen their employability and move into the labour market, whether it's part-time or intermittent, if there's an episodic disability.

We really are trying to make that a better situation so that you can access support no matter where you are in your employment journey, and we do want that to be tied to the individual's employment goals, wherever those employment goals may land. We're not saying that full-time employment is the only outcome for individuals.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Have you consulted with municipalities and the DSS?

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** We have.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Stakeholders who I've talked to are very concerned about some of these changes and the fact that a lot of people need more supports than \$1,200 a year. That will be the average per client. Some clients have the ability to obtain as much as \$3,700 or \$3,800 a month under individual programs. So they're concerned that that amount of money is not going to achieve success for people trying to get back into the workforce.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I think the approach, in essence, is to really tailor the benefit to the individual and their needs. I think it's a far more thoughtful approach than the one that we're replacing.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** That's correct, Minister. I also think that one of the things to keep in mind is that when we look at the average amount annually that a person with a disability or a person without a disability—the Work-Related Benefit was also available to non-disabled adults in ODSP, which was an inequity, because the same benefit wasn't available to adults in Ontario Works, who actually have, as a condition of eligibility, a requirement to pursue employment. So there were questions of fairness in relation to that.

The average amount that people were accessing on an annual basis was about \$820, so it wasn't even the full amount of the Work-Related Benefit. If you take the Work-Related Benefit out, the average that people were accessing was about \$404 a month. The \$1,800 annual maximum, which will have a flexible guideline to be approved above that, given the unique individual employment plan of a person, we think will actually do a better job of supporting people towards their employment goals.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I look forward to a briefing on that.

Minister, yesterday in your comments you did not commit to ensure that social assistance incomes are adequate. This year's budget brings OW benefits up to about \$656 per month, which, as we all know, is shockingly inadequate. Overall, for all recipients of OW and ODSP, the rates remain far too low. The Lankin-Sheikh report heard the same message. We know that the PCs cut social assistance rates by 22% back in the 1990s and then froze them for eight years. We know that your government ended the freeze in 2004, but the increases have only been 17% over those 11 years.

After 11 years of Liberal government, you haven't fixed the damage. Under the Liberal plan, what year will it be before social assistance rates for all social assistance recipients are restored to a purchasing power equal to or

greater than they were before the devastating 22% cut under the PC government?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Ms. Forster, I find this very interesting, because of course we've just been through an election and we studied your platform in some detail. We noticed that your platform failed to make any mention of social assistance, Ontario Works, ODSP and support for people with disabilities, so I'm not prepared to receive a lecture.

Clearly, my mandate letter states that I should make it a priority to reform social assistance. We take very seriously the recommendations of the Lankin-Sheikh report. Considerations of adequacy and so on will be part of that move to reform. As an example, we have made some changes. As you know, we introduced the remote communities allowance and increased that by some \$25, I believe—

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** It's \$50.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** —\$50, acknowledging the high cost of food and so on in remote communities.

We've made some incremental changes, obviously, but I look forward to these types of discussions. I and my officials are actively engaged in looking at what we might do going forward.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Why did the government cut total funding for Ontario Works financial assistance last year to the tune of \$109.5 million, a 4.6% cut? Can you explain where those cuts—

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I don't think there are any cuts. This is a mandatory program, so it responds to demand. Our Ontario Works numbers have been declining, as you probably know.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Right. Yesterday you gave caseload figures that are actually 10,600 below your projected caseloads. When we looked at this document here, the results-based briefing book, in the numbers you quoted yesterday there was a discrepancy of almost 11,000 cases lower for this year than what actually were in this book.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I would say that's good news, is it not? Is this not—

**Mr. Richard Steele:** We'll have to take that back in terms of we're not sure what that discrepancy would be. There certainly has been a drop in caseload in the last years.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** There is a drop in caseload, so perhaps there was a newer projection than when the estimates were provided—

**Mr. Richard Steele:** We can certainly reconcile between the two numbers and explain why—it is difficult with the numbers changing every month to keep the numbers together, but we can certainly explain any variance there is.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** So you'll get back to us on that?

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** We can. I just wanted to add, though, that we do know that the caseload actually declined by 2.7% in Ontario Works. So notwithstanding that there were increases, for example, in the rates themselves, there were changes related to increasing the asset limit of Ontario Works, the introduction of the \$200,

which have all caused flat-rate earnings exemption—the decline in the caseload as the economy begins to recover and people are exiting to jobs actually means that we may see expenditure declines that are not as high as what we originally forecast in January, at the beginning of every year.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** The decline that I'm referring to is on the public accounts, page 2 of 95, just for your reference.

Today, you clarified that you'll provide \$179.8 million over three years for the developmental services sector front-line workers. Could you provide the committee with a written response at some point that provides the total additional funding for wage enhancements for each agency over the next three years, and does that form part of the agencies' base budget?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Which agencies? I'm just wanting to understand—

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** The agencies that the \$179.8 million is going to for front-line workers.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** But obviously there are going to be negotiations taking place.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** It would be a period of time until we could provide that.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Yes.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** We're just beginning those discussions.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Right. But maybe you could even provide us with what you're targeting.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** What we end up resulting in with the methodology?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Right.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** When we get that done—

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** It's going to take some time.

**Ms. Karen Chan:** —the work that's under way.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Right. Okay.

I had one more question with respect to the federal government tax credit that actually came out of my office. Do I have a couple of minutes left?

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Yes. You have four minutes left.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I have four minutes left. Ontario Works provides the Ontario child tax benefit to a maximum of \$500 per month in addition to the basic needs and shelter costs. What is happening—this was actually from a woman in my riding, Kaitlyn MacLeod, who is age 25 and has three small children. She received some money from the child tax benefit in October. It took a while for her to get approved. She did get an amount of money for the month of October, but she's still waiting for money for July, August and September.

Anyway, in the process of waiting for that money, she got behind on her bills, so she had to use the money that she should have repaid Ontario Works when she got her child tax benefit because of the delays at the approval stage from the federal government. Now, for the month of November, this mother with three kids has only \$2.50 to live on, and Ontario Works locally cannot release her more funds for basic needs or shelter.



I'm wondering, is this a common occurrence, that as people are waiting to be approved for the child tax credit, they're often finding themselves out there with no supports?

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**Ms. Erin Hannah:** Thank you. Just a little bit of context to help people understand, I think, the nature of your question: The federal government is the one that issues the child tax benefit as well as the National Child Benefit supplement, both of which, by the way, are exempt as income for the purposes of Ontario Works.

What we do provide within Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, though, is a benefit called the Transition Child Benefit. It was introduced at the same time as the Ontario Child Benefit to prevent situations where people may find themselves in duress, either because they can't access the Ontario Child Benefit—for example, they have a newborn, and it's simply not in play yet—or they've forgotten to file their tax return. We give them a four-month period to be able to do that, and we'll provide them with the Transition Child Benefit to offset that.

Once they actually receive their federal benefits as well as their provincial Ontario Child Benefit—because we don't want to have duplication of the benefits that are provided, there is a requirement, in the first month following receipt, to provide some of the monies back. It's not the full amount of the monies, because we don't want to cause situations of such hardship.

I would never speak to a specific case, but I would say that that's not a common occurrence. In situations where somebody does find themselves in an emergency situation, they are strongly encouraged to visit their case-worker and talk about what supports might be available through, for example, discretionary benefits.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Okay. Last question, I guess: Why does your government continue to pursue rate restructuring each time the Ontario Child Benefit increases? This means that single parents on social assistance—the poorest—often see no increase because you claw back the same amount from social assistance as the OCB increases.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** The introduction of the Ontario Child Benefit was, at its heart, intended to create a benefit that consolidated different supports for children who were in disparate areas of programming. The basic needs component of Ontario Works and ODSP, as well as two allowances at the time, were part of that consolidation. We do, as I mentioned, have some supplementary benefits that remain behind to ensure that there weren't huge negative impacts.

As the Ontario Child Benefit increases, we do offset those remaining supplements—we bring them down—because everybody is treated the same in the Ontario Child Benefit, regardless of where your income comes from. Whether it's fully from employment or fully from social assistance, you're treated the same. It's simply an income test, and that's why we continue to align with that objective.

We will be considering the go-forward path, given the decision to index the Ontario Child Benefit, which is a different construct than an outright increase.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** So in fact, people will just continue to live in poverty because, as the federal government increases the child tax credit benefit, we continue to claw back on this end, so people really just continue to live in poverty unless something else happens in their life.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Thank you, Ms. Forster. We will now move to the government, and to Mr. Dong.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** The 18-minute infomercial.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Don't take away my limited time, Randy, please.

Minister, thank you very much for attending the estimates committee and giving us all these informative presentations on the portfolio that you have. I have to admit, it's perhaps not the most fancy portfolio out there, but it's very important.

I see that the colleagues on the other side are very much interested in the details of your portfolio. They've been asking a lot of technical questions, which for me is good. It's a sign that they are paying close attention and are very interested in the portfolio.

I believe in the work you do. It's definitely very important for this province. I think that our province is judged on how well we take care of our vulnerable. I think even the members opposite will probably share this view and perhaps envy this opportunity that we have to govern from the centre, so look after our budget—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** The activist centre.

**Mr. Han Dong:** That's right, the activist centre. Thank you. See, you remember better than I do. Our communication has done its job.

In my riding, the great riding of Trinity–Spadina, we see a lot of growth in condos. There's a lot of people in suits and busy at work. It looks like they're doing very well. But I always get reminded that the median annual family income is just over \$60,000. So there are still a lot of people who we need to look after. They're struggling to find opportunities to work, to get on their feet, and it doesn't take much to knock someone off their feet financially, especially in this world of consumption on credit. It could happen to any of us. It's reassuring to know that we have the social safety net in place to look after these people.

I know that in the last couple of years there has been extensive review, analysis and investment by the Ontario government. I heard that in the same two years the Ontario Works rate went up by \$50 per month for a single adult. That is \$600 a year. To me, it's quite a significant amount, and it shows the commitment that we have to helping those people in a less fortunate position.

Can you help me and explain to the committee, what is the government's current strategy on investments in Ontario's social assistance programs, including Ontario Works and ODSP?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you very much, Mr. Dong, for those kind words. We're all convinced that we're doing very important work in accordance with our government's plan, as was detailed in the budget, which was successfully passed and on which, of course, we ran in the last election and were returned as the government. I'm sure you'll recall that chapter in the budget which details a fair society. I think that's confirmation from the people of Ontario that we're following their wishes also in ensuring that the most vulnerable in our society are looked after appropriately.

You mentioned the increase for singles on social assistance. That is an 8% increase this year, which is clearly going to make a difference. The reason that we increased in particular that group of individuals—singles without children on Ontario Works—is that, as the Lankin-Sheikh report detailed, these are the people who are actually falling behind. We need to ensure that they can take advantage not only of the basic shelter allowance and so on but also be supported through this increase, obviously maintaining their medical and dental benefits, should they be able to achieve some employment, to give them some security.

The Lankin-Sheikh report had many, many recommendations, and we are still looking at those to see how we can implement them because they were obviously the result of major consultations with municipalities and with stakeholders. I have a partnership table that we have many stakeholders sit at who advise us. One of the representatives on that partnership table comes from Voices from the Street, a very interesting organization based here in Toronto representing the homeless, essentially.

We definitely intend to move forward. In my mandate letter, as I mentioned previously, the Premier is asking me to look at social assistance reform. This was a very good step forward. We're very pleased with this initiative. It's being well received by our stakeholders. But we certainly do acknowledge there's much more to do.

I think Erin, who actually didn't get to talk very much yesterday but has been delighted to contribute today, probably would like to address a little bit where we're going with social assistance reform.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** Thank you, Minister.

It's a great question because this is such a complicated system, both Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program. We've been very thoughtful about developing a measured, multi-year plan. It is, as the minister said, a work in progress in many ways.

**1740**

We have four pillars that actually are guiding our reform work as we look ahead. The first is around enhancing employment outcomes. In some ways it goes to the earlier question from the committee member about whether we think that we're already achieving the best outcomes that we could achieve. I think we would categorically say absolutely not. We think that we can do better and we want to do better. We want to focus the incentives that we can put in place, the tools, the access

to services and the integration and coordination of employment and training services across the full spectrum, not just within the social assistance arena, so that people actually are better able to prepare for jobs and step into the labour market and then, most importantly, of course, stay in the labour market.

A heavy part of our reform emphasis is on looking at strategies with our other ministry partners about how we can better support people who are more distant from the labour market, those who really are facing much more difficult barriers to taking that step forward.

The second pillar that we're looking at in terms of our reform is the access that people have to incomes as well as to other supports and benefits. The minister already spoke about—and you mentioned—the targeted rate increases that we have gone forward with in the past two years that really aimed at not only lifting the lowest levels of support for those people who are in deepest needs, which are the single individuals without children on Ontario Works—continuing to lift supports for people with disabilities receiving ODSP, as well as families receiving Ontario Works.

Part of that approach was also to start to narrow the disparity between the amount of support that individuals receiving Ontario Works and non-disabled individuals in ODSP families have access to so that we can start to harmonize the level of supports that people have access too, and not at the lowest common denominator. We're trying to gradually bring it up.

We think that there's more work to do on the adequacy front. We are actively looking at research, both internally and with our external academic partners, community agency partners etc., to look at what does adequacy really mean and what are your choices to put forward to the government to consider as we move ahead.

The other work that we're doing, and it was mentioned in the 2014 budget, is working with our partners in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to consider options for how people might be able to access health benefits in a broader low-income population so that they're not only available within social assistance, which can increase what we call the welfare wall, so it makes it more difficult for people to leave.

The other two pillars that we're focused on are program integrity and accountability. It's not always the most sexy topic, perhaps I'll call it, but it really is critical to where we can place our investment. We're looking at opportunities to do business in new ways while also enhancing, through efficiencies, the integrity of the program. Some examples of that are exploring the move away from paper-based processes and really trying to look at, through service delivery excellence, which is the fourth pillar, what that can mean in terms of time spent with clients.

We're also looking at leveraging government buying power for different types of benefits through buy-direct arrangements. So there's a number of ways that we're trying to both address integrity but also move forward on a service-excellence agenda. As I mentioned, that's the

fourth pillar. This committee heard a lot yesterday about one aspect of our service modernization agenda, which is replacing our legacy technology, but there are other components that we're also looking at in terms of driving forward on our reform plan.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Well, thank you very much for the answer. I like the notion that you said that we can do better. In fact, I just put down something that came to my mind, which is the integrity and maintaining the original intent of the program, which is what you said about accountability. So I think we're on the same page. I'm very optimistic about the work you do. Thank you very much for the presentation.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Mr. Balkissoon?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Thank you, Minister. I guess I'll probably have the last question on this side, so I just want to say thank you to all your ministry staff because I did serve in a ministry at one time and I did have a complete tour of FRO and a few of the other departments. I think that, dealing with the public, you can probably be called the complaints department of the Ontario government because you do good work, but no matter how much you do, there's not enough for the people out there that you serve.

With that comment, my colleague on the other side, Mr. Hillier, was talking about ODSP. I just happen to have a presentation that I picked up during our committee work. I just want to read it to you because I think it will clarify why the drop-off in ODSP is such a small percentage. If you could make a comment, I'd accept.

In this presentation, it says that under the ODSP Act, a person with a disability is a person with a "substantial physical or mental impairment that is continuous or recurrent and is expected to last a year or more."

I go back to the words "substantial," "continuous" and "recurrent." In addition, "The physical or mental impairment must directly result in a substantial restriction to the person's ability to work."

It further goes on to say, "The impairment(s), its duration, and the restriction(s) must also be verified by an approved health care professional."

That act, if I remember correctly, was brought in by the Conservative government in 1997. Seeing the rules, for someone to qualify for ODSP, it's very difficult. Once they qualify, just by reading the rules, it tells me that they're not going to drop off the program very easily. They'll be there for a long time.

Therefore, whatever he was reading in the results book that only 2% dropped off the plan on an annual basis—this definition lends itself to say why those numbers are so low. Am I correct?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** In general, as I think you've obviously pointed out, the reason people are on ODSP to begin with is because they have a severe impairment. The caseload in general obviously includes a whole spectrum of disabilities. That spectrum goes through a physical disability, perhaps as a result of an industrial accident or

some other accident where the person is physically impaired. We are seeing a number of individuals with mental health issues. There are obviously, as we've discussed today, those with a developmental disability. So there's a broad spectrum, but these are people who definitely need our assistance in terms of their ability to achieve employment.

Can we do better? Of course. We believe we can. This is why we have these employment and modernization funds for the developmentally disabled, because some of it does relate to stigma.

Mr. Balkissoon, you and I were on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, and I remember one of the issues you brought to the table frequently was the issue of stigma in the workplace related to mental health situations and employers shying away from situations like that.

There's clearly a lot more that we need to do in terms of not only supporting individuals with disabilities, but trying to get them to achieve some measure of activity in the workforce. Whether it be volunteer positions, whether it be sheltered employment, whether it be competitive employment, it does require a lot of intensive support and individual tailoring of that individual's abilities—to use a positive word—and how they can be part of our society because, overall, our goal is inclusion.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Two minutes.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** As I said yesterday, the goal of social inclusion is something that does determine one's health status in general. We know that if people are involved, they can definitely be as healthy as possible when they are involved in that situation.

You bring a very important point, and perhaps, Erin or Karen, would you like to leap in, either of you, because—

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** Sure. I can say—

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** It's Erin's day today.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** And then I'll invite Karen.

The other side of the coin related to your question—it's not just the length of time that people stay within the Ontario Disability Support Program, and it's for a variety of reasons. Barriers to employment are certainly one of those reasons. We also, on the opposite side though, are continuing to see a caseload growth, and that really is driving a lot of our expenditures as well. The reason we're seeing that kind of growth is related to the definition of "disability for qualification," but the sense of the interpretation of that definition has expanded over time. We also have an aging population as the baby boomers grow older—

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I would also say that diagnosis of the various disabilities has gotten better between today and the first day of the act.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** Particularly in the mental health area.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Exactly.

**Ms. Erin Hannah:** We know that, of our new grants to ODSP, almost half are individuals whose primary or

secondary condition is a mental health condition. It makes a difference in the types of interventions you put in place to try to help people connect to the labour market as well and to support community inclusion, because we do think that employment isn't the only outcome for people. It really needs to be individualized. Social inclusion or community inclusion can be the right outcome for that individual. It's not a homogenous group of people.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** I would like to thank the minister and her staff for appearing before the committee.

This concludes the committee's consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Standing order 66(b) requires that the Chair put, without further amendment or debate, every question necessary to dispose of the estimates.

Are the members ready to vote?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Recorded vote, Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Recorded vote?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Shall vote—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Chair, just a point of order once again: I understand that it's vote 701 that you're calling first?

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** First.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I see on vote 701 that we have the parliamentary assistant's salary included in that vote—

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** I'm sorry. There's no further debate—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** No, it's a point of order, Chair. Should the parliamentary assistant not declare a pecuniary interest and—

*Interjection.*

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** No. We're going to move on now. Thank you, Mr. Hillier.

Shall vote 701 carry?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Recorded vote.

#### Ayes

Balkissoon, Dong, Kiwala, Rinaldi, Wong.

#### Nays

Forster, Hillier, Walker.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Carried.

Shall vote 702 carry? Carried.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Mr. Hillier asked for a recorded vote.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** On everything?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's fine.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Oh, you're fine.

**The Vice-Chair (Miss Monique Taylor):** Okay.

Shall the 2014-15 estimates of the Ministry of Community and Social Services carry? Carried.

Shall I report the 2014-15 estimates of the Ministry of Community and Social Services to the House? Carried.

Adjourned.

*The committee adjourned at 1748.*







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