



Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3943
President: Jim Beattie
Vice President: Brenda McLaughlin

Good morning, I want to commend the committee for holding these hearings and to thank you for the opportunity to present our views on this extremely important piece of legislation.

I am here representing over 500 front line workers employer by agencies who provide developmental services and supports in and around Hamilton.

Our members provide day supports, respite, residential, employment and SIL supports as well as a variety of other supports to over 1000 individuals.

As a front line worker myself with over 20 years experience I have seen how services for people with a developmental disability have changed over the years. Much of that change has been for the better. And while we still have a ways to go we clearly have made progress towards the goal of ensuring that individuals with a developmental become full participants in our communities and society.

Many groups and individuals have been responsible for the positive changes that have occurred and while acknowledging that I want to emphasize the role played in those changes by community based, not -for-profit agencies. Agencies like the one I work for have been in the forefront of those changes. This, despite the fact that funding has never kept pace with the needs of the individuals whom the agencies support. On reflection, it's not surprising that agencies have been in the forefront of change. Many members of their Boards of Directors and front line staff as well have close family connections with

individuals who receive support. Given the crucial role that community agencies play in the planning and delivery of services and supports to individuals with a developmental disability it is disturbing that greater emphasis isn't placed on their financial health and long-term viability in Bill 77.

I now want to draw your attention your attention to certain sections of the legislation that we believe need to be amended. Yesterday you heard a number of concerns expressed regarding the creation of application centres which the legislation, if passed, will create. I don't want to reiterate all the valid critical points that were made yesterday about the drawbacks of application centres, instead I want to speak to you about our experience in Hamilton with Contact Hamilton. Contact Hamilton is in many ways similar to the application centres as envisioned in the legislation.

It was established in the 1990's under the Harris Government.

Funded by the government Contact Hamilton was, and is an agency that provides intake, assessment and referral services for children and individuals with a developmental disability. It is a separate entity from the community-based agencies. When it was established, there already was in existence an organization that functioned under the auspices of community based agencies that provided intake, assessment and referral services to families and individuals. The organization was similar to the one that currently exists in Toronto. However despite its usefulness it was replaced by Contact Hamilton . To fund Contact Hamilton the government clawed back nearly \$1,000,000 from the budgets of the community agencies in Hamilton. So in light of our experience in Hamilton I want to ask, how does the Government plan to fund the

application centres? Is the Government planning to take money from the budgets of community agencies to establish application centres like the past government did when it created Contact Hamilton? And how much will that cost? Finally, why add another level of bureaucracy when, given adequate resources, community agencies can fulfill the necessary functions just fine?

I want to turn now to the issue of waiting lists. And again, I won't repeat all that has been said on this point. Suffice it to say, that it is unconscionable in Ontario, in 2008, that we can even contemplate enshrining into legislation waiting lists for supports and services that individuals need to allow them to fully participate in society. Access to those supports and services should be, must be, a right.

I want to give you an example of what can happen when individuals are placed on waiting lists without access to services. In the mid 90's Sally (not her real name) was enrolled in the day program where I worked at the time. Sally was in her late 20's and had been without services or supports for a number of years. During that time she remained at home with her ageing parents. When Sally had graduated from school she was outgoing, happy and good skills but by the time she had enrolled in our program all that was gone. She was withdrawn, lacked confidence and the skills that she had mastered while at school were greatly diminished. This was due to her being without supports for so long. Sally's experience isn't unusual, it's more the norm than the exception. Enshrining waiting lists in law will only create more situations like Sally's. The final issue we wish to address is one of identified needs in relation to community agencies and the services and supports that they provide. Again I will use examples

from Hamilton.

If you turn to pages 36 and 37 of the handout I've given you you'll see the variety of services and supports requested by families and individuals who are on a waiting list with Contact Hamilton. You'll note that the greatest number of requests is for day supports (127) and accommodation (81). On page 37 you'll see a chart that predicts future needs. Again the greatest anticipated number of requests is for day supports (186) and accommodation (455). While the preceding numbers reflect requests for a wide range of day and residential supports many of the requests are for services and supports administered through non-profit community agencies.

The last four pages of the handout, pages 37 to 40 address the issue of requests for Passport funding. I want to draw your attention though, to page 40, table 50 "Modes Of Funding". Essentially what the table shows and the explanatory notes say, is that many applicants for Passport funding who initially elect to receive direct funding to act as their own employers change their choice once they receive funding and elect to access community agency services and supports. Given that most families and individuals choose to obtain their supports and services through community agencies and that many who initially choose to be their own employers upon reflection opt to use agencies it is critical that the long established community agency system be vibrant and healthy. Again we want to draw your attention to the lack of commitment in Bill 77 to the non-profit community agency system.

In closing, we want to reiterate our conviction that quality supports for a person with a developmental disability can only be sustained through public not-for-profit mandated

services in a adequately funded community agency system where workers are compensated fairly and provided appropriate training and skills enhancement and where supports meet the requested needs of individuals.

Thank you.