

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Strong reform needed in Province's developmental services sector

Recently there has been discussion surrounding the Provincial government's announcement of new funding for the developmental services sector in the 2014 Budget.

I wanted to share some thoughts on this issue, as it is an important one.

In the fall of 2012, Progressive Conservative MPP Christine Elliot (Whitby-Oshawa) began calling for the creation of a special committee, known as a Select Committee, to study the developmental services sector in Ontario. When the PC motion to create this committee was finally passed, the Select Committee on Developmental Services was convened, and over the past two years, I had been part of the committee. Its purpose was to bring recommendations to the government on how to improve services for the many Ontarians with a developmental disability who have the right to work, live and participate in our community. After travelling across Ontario and hearing from individuals, families and organizations dealing with developmental disabilities, it became clear to the committee that there are many areas where improvement is not only needed, but essential. We presented our report to the legislature July 22, 2014.

First and foremost, the committee believes it is critical to eliminate wait times for individuals. These individuals and families have described to the committee the dire situations that they face every day struggling to get by without the necessary funds, programs and access to care that they need immediately.

One of the central problems with the way the system is currently structured is how bits and pieces of funding and programming come from 10 different ministries and agencies within the government. This fragmented care and funding model has led to backlogs and wait lists that must be eliminated. Many individuals and families have shared with me how they have been strung along in this system for many months and in some cases, years. In response, the committee has called for, in addition to 46 other recommendations, one ministry to manage this programming and funding of developmental services.

We must streamline the process so that wait times and fractured ministerial processes no longer stand in the way of proper care for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. So long as we continue to spend more precious funding dollars on a broken system, we will continue to be faced by the same systemic problems we have spent so long trying to address.

If you are interested in reading the final report from the committee, please visit my website at www.sylviajonesmpp.ca

