

Lack of supports forcing those with developmental disabilities into crisis

A recent report by Ontario's Ombudsman, titled *Nowhere to Turn*, highlights the ongoing disrepair of the Province's support system for adults with developmental disabilities, Dufferin-Caledon MPP and Children and Youth Services Critic Sylvia Jones said. Since the beginning of the investigation in 2012, the Ombudsman's Office has received more than 1,500 complaints about the dire state of Ontario's support system for individuals with developmental disabilities.

"Today's report is the culmination of a long and detailed investigation, which has found that there is a lack of resources and supports available for individuals and their families, forcing many to wait and reach a state of crisis," Jones said.

"The Ombudsman's report confirms what I have heard for years since my work on the Select Committee on Developmental Services, about the dire need for changes to the delivery of services for Ontarians with developmental disabilities," she added.

Jones also said she was pleased the Ombudsman has recognized how important this issue is, and elected to investigate and recommend changes.

"I look forward to hearing in the near future the Minister's progress in implementing the 60 recommendations outlined by the Ombudsman, so every individual can receive the help they need when they need it," Jones said.

"Sadly, the report highlights thousands of individuals and families who are desperate for services. Agencies have been working in partnership with people needing supports and their families, and have been working closely with the Minister and her staff, to expand capacity and provide effective services," Janet Noel-Annable, chair of the Provincial Network on Developmental Services, commented.

She added the announcement stresses the need for increased partnership and collaboration between ministries to ensure that people with complex needs, such as a developmental disability and a mental illness or fragile medical condition, are served appropriately in a community setting that is safe and inclusive. Increasing specialized services is critical in ensuring effective services. These are welcome recommendations, and it is important that families and agencies are included to ensure that planning is holistic, nimble and meets people's needs appropriately.

The Network was also pleased to see many recommendations on increasing flexibility to agencies so they can respond more effectively to crisis situations.

"Too often, a person will go into crisis and a crisis placement is not available," Noel-Annable observed. "Being able to utilize a current vacancy to provide temporary support, and keeping crisis resources available will help tremendously in reducing inappropriate placement of people with developmental disabilities."