

Ministry of Children
and Youth Services

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MAY 19 2010

Ms. Linda Stewart
Mr. Norman Giesbrecht
Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance
310–700 Lawrence Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario
M6A 3B4

Dear Ms. Stewart and Mr. Giesbrecht:

Thank you for your letter regarding Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy and the social assistance review. I appreciate you sharing your thoughts about how we can work together to further reduce poverty for Ontarians. I am pleased to respond.

Our government recognizes the link between health outcomes and poverty reduction, and we will continue to make progress for Ontarians on both of these fronts. Reducing poverty and making sure that all Ontarians can reach their full potential is both the right thing to do and the smart thing to do for our economy.

Despite these tough economic times, we are making progress towards our goal of lifting 90,000 children out of poverty by 2013. We have:

- increased the maximum annual Ontario Child Benefit to \$1,100 per child per year, two years ahead of schedule. It will increase again to a maximum of \$1,310 annually per child by 2013;
- moved ahead to implement full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, beginning in September 2010 with an investment of \$200 million and with \$300 million the following year;
- provided an investment of \$63.5 million per year for child care, through our government's 2010 Budget, to permanently fill the funding gap left by the federal government. This investment will preserve child care spaces and help child care workers keep their jobs; and
- increased Ontario's general minimum wage to \$10.25 per hour, on March 31, 2010, for the seventh consecutive year since 2003.

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I appreciate receiving your comments related to the social assistance review and better health outcomes for Ontarians. As you know, the Ministry of Community and Social Services has the lead for reviewing Ontario's social assistance system. I note that you have also written to the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services, and Gail Nyberg, Executive Director of Daily Bread Food Bank. I trust they will take your views into consideration.

We will continue to make poverty reduction a priority for our government and will work with the federal and municipal governments and our community partners to reach the target set out in our strategy. I am confident that we can make a difference in the lives of Ontario's kids, their families, and in communities across the province.

Thank you again for sharing your views and for your interest in poverty reduction.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurel Broten".

Laurel Broten
Minister

c: The Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services