



News Release

For Immediate Release

December 5, 2011

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AGENCIES OPERATING WITH INADEQUATE MINISTRY OVERSIGHT: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) Agencies that get almost half a billion dollars from the province each year to provide supportive services to people with developmental disabilities still operate under inadequate oversight by the Ministry of Community and Social Services—15 years after our Office first noted this problem, Auditor General Jim McCarter says in his *2011 Annual Report*.

“Without proper oversight, it’s impossible for the Ministry to know whether the agencies are providing the required services and prudently spending public funds,” McCarter said today after the release of the Report. “Although the Ministry is in the midst of a transformation project to address issues such as oversight, it may take several years before many of the issues we noted can be addressed.”

The Ministry funds a variety of programs to help people with developmental disabilities live at home and work in their communities. The Ministry spent \$571 million on such programs in the 2010/11 fiscal year, including payments of \$472 million to about 400 agencies that provide or arrange for such services as assessment and counselling, speech and language therapy, and respite care. The Ministry-administered Special Services at Home (SSAH) program accounted for the remaining \$99 million.

Following are some of the Auditor General’s more significant findings:

- In half the cases reviewed in the audit, agencies didn’t have supporting documentation to adequately show a person’s eligibility or needs. As a result, the agencies couldn’t demonstrate, and the Ministry couldn’t assess, whether the person was receiving the appropriate level of service.
- The Ministry has not established acceptable standards of service, or the necessary processes to properly monitor the quality of services provided.
- Annual funding of agencies is based primarily on what they got in the past rather than what they currently need, something that worsens any funding inequities that may previously have existed. As well, some hourly service costs appeared excessive, and the cost per hour for similar services that agencies were paying varied widely across the province.
- The Ministry does not know how many people are on waiting lists for agency-based supportive services and so cannot reliably assess unmet service needs.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Jim McCarter
Auditor General
(416) 327-1326

Christine Pedias
Communications
(416) 327-2336