



News Release

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ADEQUACY OF SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN AND CHILDREN UNKNOWN: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) The provincial government does not have the information it needs to properly assess whether its efforts to prevent domestic violence or improve supports for abused women and their children are working, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk says in her *2013 Annual Report*.

“By now, we would have expected the government to have assessed whether its 2004 Domestic Violence Action Plan was meeting its objectives,” Lysyk said today after the Report was released. “However, the progress reports issued by the Ontario Women’s Directorate have been mainly anecdotal and do not indicate clearly the status of commitments or what outcomes have been achieved.”

The Ministry of Community and Social Services provides transfer payments to more than 200 community non-for-profit agencies to deliver supports and services to abused women and their children.

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

- The Ministry does not have the information it would need to identify the unmet demand for services and, in turn, allocate resources to close the gap. For example, in 2011/12, emergency shelters reported that they turned away 15,000 women, or 56% of the women who sought their help. However, this figure overstates unmet demand because the Ministry does not track how many of these women were referred to another agency and received services there.
- The Ministry’s monitoring efforts are not sufficient to identify possible service gaps, inconsistent service delivery, or inequities across agencies and regions.
- In 2009, an assessment of the conditions of shelters for abused women and their children identified more than 500 safety and security issues that needed attention, including urgent-priority items like fire alarm systems and emergency power systems. As of March 31, 2012 (the latest available update), the Ministry had provided funding for only 10% of those deficiencies and it did not know whether the funded projects had been completed or whether the transfer-payment agencies themselves had paid to fix any of the other problems.
- Ministry funding to transfer-payment agencies is generally based on what an agency received in previous years, with little or no correlation to actual needs or past performance. The audit found significant variations in unit costs among agencies providing similar services.

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