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March 30, 2010

MEMORANDUM TO: Ontario Works Administrators
Municipalities and DSSABs
First Nations

Regional Directors
Municipal Services Managers
Municipal Program Supervisors

FROM: Erin Hannah
Director, Ontario Works

RE: **Strategies to Address Workload Pressures Due to
Increased Service Demands**

Further to my memo of June 29, 2009 regarding short-term workload strategies, the ministry is adopting a number of the strategies on a permanent basis and extending one for an additional year, recognizing that there continues to be significant demands on the service delivery system.

The following strategies will be implemented on a permanent basis:

- Participation Requirement Deferrals

Administrators have the flexibility to determine the appropriate length of deferral given individual case circumstances. Administrators may set an appropriate bring-forward date on a deferral based on the individual circumstances.

- Participation Agreements

Participation agreements may be updated by telephone where there have been no changes with respect to a participant's employment assistance activity. Review dates may be set for three, four or six months in SDMT. Please note that where a participant's circumstances have changed, updates to the participation agreement must be completed in person, with the participant's signature on the updated agreement.

Ontario Works policy will be updated to permanently reflect the above noted changes. These changes take effect immediately.

In addition, Ontario Works policy directives have been updated to reflect changes made to the verification requirements of school attendance. This permanent change means that school attendance must be verified once every 12 months for dependant children up to the age of 18 (or until he/she has graduated).

The ministry is also temporarily extending the policy requirement to conduct a financial eligibility review on all cases from once in a 12-month period to once in a 24-month period for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Delivery agents are still required to maintain regular contact with participant's through monthly reporting and updating the application.

Lastly, you will recall that as part of last year's strategies, the ministry allocated the total incentive funding for Consolidated Verification Process (CVP), Eligibility Review Offices (ERO), and Enhanced Family Support Initiative (EFSO) without the requirement to meet predetermined targets. As per my communication dated February 5, 2010, the ministry has ended the above incentive funding initiatives, and reinvested the full funding envelope into base administration. This means that delivery agents no longer have to meet performance targets related to these initiatives in order to receive their funding allocation.

Please ensure that this memo is shared with all staff within 24 hours. If you have any questions with respect to these strategies, please contact Jeff Bowen at 416-325-6272.

Original signed by

Erin Hannah

- c. Norm Helfand, Director, Ontario Disability Support Program Branch
- Maxine Daley, Director, Social Assistance and Municipal Operations Branch
- Kira Heineck, OMSSA
- Michael Nadeau, ONWAA
- First Nation Technology Providers
- Clinic Resource Office