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December 16, 2014

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Ontario Works Administrators  
- CMSMs and DSSABs

Director, Social Assistance Service Delivery Branch  
- Social Assistance Program Managers

**FROM:** Jeff Butler  
Director, Ontario Works Branch

Jeff Bowen  
Director, Social Assistance and Municipal Operations  
Branch

**SUBJECT:** **Additional Administrative Relief re: Implementation  
of the Social Assistance Management System  
(SAMS)**

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I am writing to thank you for your continued support in implementing the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) across the province. In recognition of the impacts to delivery agents, the ministry will be providing additional temporary workload reduction measures to support you in post-implementation activities.

The ministry recognizes that delivery agents have taken measures to support SAMS implementation, including the redeployment of specialized staff to assist with Ontario Works intakes. The following additional temporary workload reduction measures aim to provide greater flexibility for delivery agents to manage SAMS post-implementation and support stabilization.

- Deferrals from Participation: Currently, Administrators have flexibility in determining the length of a deferral based on individual circumstances. In general, deferrals are approved for three months and then reviewed. We previously communicated Participation Agreement/Outcome Plan deferrals could be extended up to a 6 month period where appropriate. At this time, the ministry will continue this provision until March 31, 2015.

- Updates to Participation Agreements: Administrators are required to ensure a valid Participation Agreement/Outcome Plan is in place for all participants and that these agreements are updated on the set review date, based on the participant's circumstances. The ministry will waive the requirement to update expired Participation Agreements/Outcome Plans until May 1, 2015.
- Eligibility Verification Process (EVP): Under the Eligibility Verification Model, each month, 3% of cases are identified as high risk and assigned for staff review. We previously communicated this requirement would be reduced to 2%. Subsequent to reducing the EVP target, the ministry advised delivery agents to focus efforts on the pre-conversion backlog until the interface with third-party databases was available. At this time, the ministry will suspend all EVP requirements until March 31, 2015 to alleviate the workload pressures on staff and to enable the development of the interfaces. This will also allow for a case prioritization process to be established.
- Program Delivery Funding and Outcomes Achievements: As you know, under the Ontario Works Program Delivery Funding Model up to 15% of Upload Funding can be recovered based on non-achievement of contracted employment outcome targets. The ministry will waive any potential recoveries for non-achievement in 2014. As part of Ontario Works Service Contract negotiations, consideration of post-implementation activities will be given by the ministry when setting outcomes targets with delivery partners for 2015.
- Family Support: As a condition of eligibility for social assistance, clients are required to pursue any financial resources to which they or their dependents may be entitled, including child support. Eligibility for social assistance does not depend on the receipt of support payments, but on the efforts made to obtain them. The ministry recognizes Family Support Workers are being reassigned to support the implementation of SAMS, as such where a Family Support Worker is not available to assist clients who request help to pursue child support, there will not be any penalties for clients or delivery agents (i.e. pursuit of support can be temporarily waived until such time as FSW help is available).
- Overpayments and Recovery: The ministry acknowledges that overpayment collection activities, including validation prior to collection, are not a critical priority for delivery agents at this time. Delivery agents can defer such activities and address at a later time as part of their stabilization activities.

The ministry will also be reviewing scheduled communications, training and other planned activities that are not related to SAMS implementation and where possible, will defer these activities to a later date.

I trust these workload reduction measures will help Delivery Agents to focus efforts to the most critical activities during this post-implementation period.

If you have questions on this material, please contact Gurpreet Sidhu-Dhanao at [Gurpreet.Sidhu-Dhanao@ontario.ca](mailto:Gurpreet.Sidhu-Dhanao@ontario.ca) or by phone at 416-325-6272.

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*original signed by*

Jeff Butler

Jeff Bowen

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