

**Ministry of Community  
and Social Services**

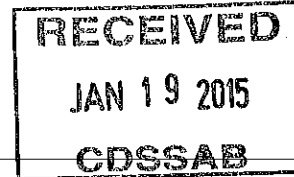
Assistant Deputy Minister  
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Operations Division

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**Ministère des Services  
sociaux et communautaires**

Sous-ministre adjoint  
Division des opérations  
relatives à l'aide sociale

*Édifice Hepburn, 6<sup>e</sup> étage  
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January 14, 2015

[garyscripnick@ntl.sympatico.ca](mailto:garyscripnick@ntl.sympatico.ca)

Dear Mr. Scripnick:

We are in receipt of your letter dated December 15, 2014. Thank you for bringing NOSDA's concerns to our attention. We appreciate hearing from our municipal delivery partners and are committed to working with you as partners during the stabilization of SAMS.

As you are aware, the ministry has been working very closely with our municipal partners to identify and address issues with the new system. Since your letter was drafted, we have already made great progress toward resolving many of the issues you have identified.

You may also be aware that the SAMS Technical Working Group met this Monday (January 12, 2015) to work in partnership understanding of the key issues with SAMS and associated business processes, as well as to inform the prioritization of changes going forward. This Working Group includes representation from Northern Ontario including Shelley Shute, Director of Integrated Human Services, Ontario Works, Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board, Nancy Ferraro, Ontario Works Program Manager, Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board and a representative from NOSDA.

An update on the progress of the SAMS Technical Working Group will be shared with the OMSSA sub-group on SAMS this Friday (January 16, 2015).

As you can appreciate, implementing a project of this magnitude is never without its challenges, particularly over the period immediately following implementation. The SAMS Project team and ministry management know just how hard NOSDA members and other offices across Ontario have been working to make sure our most vulnerable are supported and client service is not impacted.

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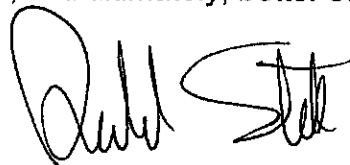
We can assure you that the SAMS Project team has placed significant priority on ensuring that local staff are being supported. A change of this magnitude can't happen overnight, or even over a couple of months, but the Project team is committed to helping its municipal partners solve local issues and continue improving system functionality. In this regard, the Project has been in contact with Fern Dominelli to discuss potential additional supports to our Northern partners.

As you know, a successful implementation requires a significant investment from both the province and our delivery partners. That is why the province is paying 100% of the development, technical implementation support and ongoing maintenance of the solution.

In response to municipal requests, the ministry has also provided its delivery partners with \$10 million in one-time, 100% provincial funding, as well as administrative relief measures to help address some of the additional costs associated with the implementation of SAMS. We also continue to recognize that some of the administrative costs associated with implementation will be 50/50 cost-shared with municipalities, namely soft costs involved with site preparedness.

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

Once again, thank you for sharing your concerns with us. Please be assured that we remain confident that the new computer system will better support staff that deliver social assistance, and ultimately, better serve the people who rely on our programs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Steele". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Steele  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Social Assistance Operations Division