

**Ministry of Community
and Social Services**

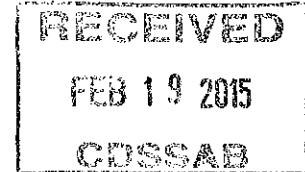
Assistant Deputy Minister
Social Assistance
Operations Division

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**Ministère des Services
sociaux et communautaires**

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

*Édifice Hepburn, 6^e étage
80, rue Grosvenor
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February 12, 2015

Gary Scripnick
Chair

Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA)
Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board
500 Algonquin Blvd. East
Timmins, ON
P4N 1B7

Dear Mr. Scripnick:

Thank you for your letter to the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario, regarding the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS). I am pleased to respond.

SAMS is a very important new technology system that replaces an aged and inadequate platform. While we are confident that SAMS will better support staff that deliver social assistance services and improve customer service for those who rely on them, we acknowledge that the transition has been challenging and that the implementation of SAMS must be improved.


In the coming weeks and months, the ministry will be taking specific actions to deal with immediate issues. This includes selecting an independent, third-party advisor, who will provide further advice and assistance, evaluate our progress and recommend actions to help us reach our goals.

We are also committed to fixing outstanding issues with the system. We continue to make progress and implement system fixes on a regular basis. The input we have received from our Ontario Works partners through the OMSSA Technical Working Group has been important in coming to a shared understanding of the critical issues, developing a comprehensive assessment of those outstanding issues and a detailed priority list to address issues over the next two months.

Lastly, the ministry will be increasing our engagement with front-line staff through widespread face-to-face discussions with staff at 30 locations across the province. This will certainly include locations in the North. This will provide senior ministry officials with helpful insights and understanding of SAMS.

The efforts of Ontario Works staff to work through challenges while providing the best service to our clients have been outstanding. I strongly encourage NOSDA members to continue to raise their issues through the OMSSA Technical Working Group and during engagement sessions with ministry officials. I look forward to continuing to work with you and our municipal partners through this transition.

Sincerely,

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

Richard Steele
Assistant Deputy Minister