



December 20, 2018

Dear Chairs of District Social Service Administration Boards:

I am writing to share a copy of the District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) Governance and Accountability Review Final Report, which was commissioned by the previous government, and to communicate next steps for this work.

The recommendations presented in the report reflect the input heard through consultation with board members, staff and municipal representatives in September and October 2017. The report notes that most participants across all the three groups felt that the Boards were working well and providing vital services to the residents of their Districts.

The report does speak to historical challenges for some Boards related to issues such as the apportionment of costs among municipal members and resolving associated conflicts. It is clear from the report that these issues are complex and influenced by various intersecting elements of the DSSAB governance framework and most importantly that there is no consensus among participants on the best path forward.

As such, the government will not be moving forward to implement the recommendations laid out in the report. However, I have directed ministry staff, working in cooperation with partner ministries, to proceed with focused discussions with the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA), the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) and the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) beginning in the new year.

The intent of this work is to identify opportunities in the following three areas of DSSAB governance and accountability:

- Exploring ways to ensure that alternate cost apportionment formulas reflect the collective responsibility of all municipalities for the provision of services to residents in a District;
- Exploring an effective mechanism for resolving conflicts that arise with respect to the apportionment of costs; and
- Enhancing understanding of the role of DSSABs, Board functions and responsibilities and transparency of decision making and communication.

This focused work is best supported by a continued, “status quo” environment for cost apportionment. Therefore, the government has extended the current moratorium on apportionment changes, for an additional 12-month period, through December 31, 2019.

Assistant Deputy Ministers Richard Steele and Aki Tefera will address the extension of the moratorium on apportionment changes in greater detail under separate cover.

Our government is focused on delivering better results for people through simple, efficient and accountable services. We want to take the time needed to get things right.

I am confident that by working together, we can identify practical, effective improvements to governance practices and accountability mechanisms that promote the principle of collective responsibility, and support accessible, high-quality services for the people of Northern Ontario.

The ministry will be in touch with NOSDA, FONOM and NOMA early in the new year to set plans for the work ahead.

Kindest regards,

Original signed by:

Lisa MacLeod
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Women’s Issues, Immigration and Poverty Reduction

Enclosure

- c. Richard Steele, Assistant Deputy Minister, Social Assistance Operations Division
Aklilu Tefera, Interim Assistant Deputy Minister, Social Policy Development
Division