

The Honourable Deb Matthews, MPP
Minister of Health
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

c/o Mennonite Central Committee Ontario
50 Kent Ave.
Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1

March 25, 2010

Dear Minister Matthews,

The decision the McGuinty government has taken to end the Special Diet Allowance for people on Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program has been interpreted as a disturbing signal about the degree to which government is committed to the goals of poverty reduction and the importance of protecting the human rights of people with disabilities.

However, it also presents you with the opportunity to create a new program that will address the acknowledged shortcomings of the Special Diet Allowance program, while ensuring continuation of the important financial support it provides to people with documented health challenges.

In light of the government's announcement that the Ministry of Health will be creating a replacement program for the Special Diet Allowance, we are writing to forward our proposal for Five Principles that should form the basis for this new program.

The 25 in 5 Network and its partners, the ODSP Action Coalition and the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO), are circulating the enclosed Five Principles document to other partner organizations, individuals, and supporters. We trust that you will hear from many around the province who also believe that the new program must be based on these principles.

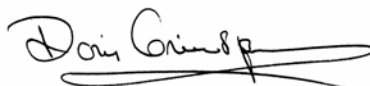
Statements about the scope and mandate of the new program have been made by members of government that have led many to fear that people currently receiving Special Diet will no longer be adequately supported by our government. We trust that these statements are not an accurate reflection of your position as the minister responsible for the creation of this new program.

We request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss these principles and your vision for the new program. We have worked well with you in the past, and trust that we can continue to do so in this instance.

Sincerely,



Mike Creek
Co-Chair, 25 in 5 Network



Doris Grinspun
Executive Director, RNAO



Kyle Vose
Co-Chair, ODSP Action Coalition

CC: The Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario
The Honourable Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Laurel Broten, Minister of Children and Youth Services
Tim Hudak, MPP, Leader of the Official Opposition
Andrea Horwath, MPP, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Ontario