

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Presidents with members in the Ministry of Community and Social Services
All Stewards in the Ministry of Community and Social Services

FROM: Ruth Hamilton, OPS Supervisor

DATE: July 8, 2011

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Community and Social Services –
ODSP Sub-Committee
ERC Minutes – June 21, 2011**

Attached, for your information, are the minutes of the above captioned meeting.

Please post or otherwise make them available to the members in your workplaces.

Also attached is a MERC referral form which should be used when referring unresolved local issues to the ministry level. The referral should be sent care of the Job Security Unit with all the supporting documentation, (e.g. minutes, correspondence, etc.), with any referrals.

PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINISTRY MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE EMPLOYER.

AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:

IN SOLIDARITY,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President



Ruth Hamilton
OPS Supervisor

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att.

cc: MERC Chairs
Ministry ERC

AGENDA ITEM		DISCUSSION	ACTION
New Business			
1.1	Review of Agenda/Action Items	<p>Regional Roadshow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations Division Management Committee has endorsed the Regional Roadshow proposal. • Management proposing to reconvene Regional Roadshow Sub-group to discuss logistics, agenda items and other facilitation details for first visit to the South West Region in September 2011. <p>Client Services Survey for ODSP recipients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey to be finalized in fall 2011. • Survey has been delayed due to postal strike and also to avoid overlapping with dissemination of Employment Supports (ES) Evaluation (see Agenda Item 3.3 below for update on ES Evaluation). <p>Workload Distribution/Setting Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union noted that staff are interested in having better clarity related to how their work links to the ministry's priorities, for this would help them to set priorities. • Management noted that a tool was provided to the caseworkers to help staff to time manage. • Union suggested that perhaps staff and managers could discuss this time management tool at their team meetings or at a one-on-one to allow staff to achieve clarity on what activities to prioritize. • Management proposed that the issue will be discussed at the ODSP Network along with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconvene Sub-group in July/August to finalize details for first visit in September 2011. • Management will provide survey to ODSP Subcommittee of MERC for comment before its distribution. • Workload distribution tools, supports and strategies will be discussed with ODSP Network in the near future and will report-back to Subcommittee.

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		discussion around the tools that have been provided to see how these can be incorporated in to daily use.	
ODSP Modernization			
2.1	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management noted that the ministry is working to develop alternative ways of providing training to frontline staff (e.g. self-directed training). • Management is working to determine what the key training deliverables will be from now until March 2012. • The Union asked if there will be instructor-led training available following March 2012. • Management responded that instructor-led training will not be available following March 2012, but, as part of the new training framework, other training strategies will be put in place. • The union raised concern that current mentoring roles are more akin to training, and the new training framework should clarify the mentoring and training expectations. 	Management will consult with the ODSP Subcommittee of MERC on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what the key training deliverables will be leading up to March 2012; and, • what the new training framework will be moving forward (beyond March 2012).
2.2	Eastern Region – Service Delivery Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management shared, for the Subcommittee of MERC’s information, an Eastern Region memo to all staff summarizing program successes in that region over the past few years. • Management noted that feedback to staff may be a best practice. 	
2.3	Project Wrap-up and Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ODSP Modernization Project will wrap-up in March 2012. • Management noted that it is working closely with the Social Assistance and Municipal Operations Branch to transition the project 	

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		activities to regular business.	
2.4	Phase 2 Recruitment Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management reported that Phase 2 (South-West and North regions) written component will take place in July 2011. • Wave 2 and 3 regions targeted for late summer/early fall. • A make-up test will be provided to all regions for staff who applied during the recruitment exercise, based on exceptional circumstances. 	Management committed to providing a business process for ODSP managers to follow should a make-up test be administered for Wave 1 (and for all other regions, if necessary).
Business Arising			
3.1	Demonstration of Curam software (Version 6) - Social Services Solutions Modernization Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management notified Union that Curam V6 is not the final version and is "out-of-the-box". V6 has not yet been configured to ministry's needs. • Management emphasized that there are still decisions to be made related to scope and what will be included in the final version. Further updates will be demonstrated in the future, including staff engagement sessions beginning in the fall of 2011. • Early implementation: On-line application (May 2011) <p>Part 1 – Client Portal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2013 - Plan to launch Client Portal, a 2-way communication between client and caseworker. • Demo showed the client portal, an option for delivering the program through a new service channel. Clients would have a "my account" where they could potentially undertake a number of administrative tasks. • Union asked how information a client provided 	

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	<p>would be validated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Caseworker would validate information and the evidence is then “activated” and client file is updated. • Union asked what a client does if they do not have access to a computer. • Management reported that this is one option for clients to use. Other service delivery channels still available. • Union asked accessibility of Curam. • Management noted that Curam will meet WICAG 2.0 Accessibility Standards for accessibility. • Union asked whether letters will be digitally stored rather than being sent as hard-copies to the local office. • Management reported, considering posting client communications on the portal in order to reduce paper. Letters could be stored digitally. • Union asked how one would know if client has read a digitally stored letter. • Management noted that this would be taken into account when tailoring the software for the ministry. • Union asked what the document management system will involve, and if it will be possible to digitally store marriage certificates, for example. • Management noted that Curam is not a document management system, but the ministry will be looking into the feasibility of a document management system in the future. • Union asked when the actual product will be available. 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design phase starts in July 2011 – Design engagement is scheduled to begin in fall 2011. <p>Part 2 – Caseworker Page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curam has a Facebook look-and-feel with different sections which the caseworker can customize, move around and choose to have/or not have on their homepage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Caseload summary ○ Appointments ○ Tasks ○ Case queries • Management noted that clients will keep “Member ID”. • Union asked if it’s possible to add information to the client’s profile page (e.g. SIN, Health Card). • Management answered that yes, this is feasible, but design phase will determine if this is included. • Union asked whether SDMT Notes will be transferred over to Curam. • Management affirmed that, yes, notes will be transferred. • Union raised a concern that technological change may impact staffing. 	
3.2	Canada Post Contingency Planning - Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingency plan prepared for the month of June to ensure Ontario Works and ODSP clients receive their June cheques. • June 23, 2011 – Decision will be made to either have the cheques inducted into Canada Post or have the cheques shipped to local offices (as 	

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		<p>per contingency plan).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back-up plan also in place. Management will provide direction on what local offices are to do should the decision be made to ship cheques to the local offices on Thursday, and Canada Post returns to work on Friday, June 24, 2011. • Union asked what key messaging will be provided to communicate with clients. • Management noted that a high-level communication will be sent out to the local offices on June 23, 2011. The communication will include key information e.g. how clients will receive their cheques (pick-up or by mail). 	
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Supports Evaluation Survey - Update • Mandatory Special Necessities (MSN) 	<p>Employment Supports Evaluation Survey – Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An evaluation of Employment Supports (ES) has never been conducted. • Objectives of this current evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Document who ES is serving and how the services are being delivered; ○ Assess ES effectiveness; ○ Measure client satisfaction of the program; ○ Look at success factors and best practices; ○ Identify areas for improvement. • A consultant (Cathexis) will conduct the evaluation, working with representatives from regional offices, as well as corporate branches. • Staff will be surveyed about their experience in delivering the ES program, their experience of what works well and what could be improved. 	<p>ODSP Subcommittee of MERC will receive a copy of the survey for information before it is sent out.</p>

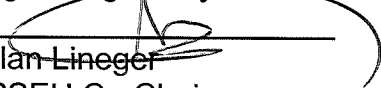
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff will receive the survey (including ODSP managers). • Participation in the survey will be voluntary and the responses to the survey will be confidential. • Management noted that they are aiming to release the survey in early July, remaining open until mid-August. • Union asked if the findings will be shared with the Subcommittee. • Management noted that, yes, the findings will be shared with the Subcommittee in March 2012. <p>Mandatory Special Necessities (MSN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union asked if additional job aids can be developed to assist new workers with issuing the MSN. 	<p>Management committed to setting up a separate meeting with the Union to gain clarification on what further tools/supports staff may require to issue the MSN.</p>
3.4	Special Diets Unit – Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Special Diet Allowance, under the current schedule, will not be paid out past July 31, 2011, as per the legislation. • Management is developing strategies to meet the July 31, 2011 timeline, as the Special Diets Unit (SDU) has met with a number of challenges. Challenges include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High number of incomplete forms received. ○ High number of forms received which should not have been directed to SDU (e.g. Mandatory Special Necessities forms). 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training significant number of new staff, with a shortage of experienced caseworkers and turnover of trained staff. ○ Canada Post disruption. ○ Workload spike related to April 1, 2011 reminder letter sent to clients. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management noted that, since early June, forms are being sent out to the field as a strategy to help address high number of forms needing to be processed by July 31, 2011. ● Further internal Special Diets Unit process changes have been made to address some of the challenges listed above (e.g. processing applications and assigning a default review date of six months where the duration was not checked). ● Management noted that a June Reminder Letter will be sent to clients once the Canada Post disruption is resolved (Approx. 44,000 clients will receive this letter). ● Management noted that the final reminder letter will be sent in mid-July, prior to the July 31, 2011 deadline. ● Union asked what information is recorded in SDMT. ● Management responded that the decision is recorded in SDMT. ● Management noted that local office staff person(s) have access to the Special Diets Unit database. ● Union noted that shipments received by local 	

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		<p>offices may contain other client file information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management is attempting to ensure that files sent out do not include this information. • Union asked if temp. agency staff are still being used in the Special Diets Unit. • Management answered that, yes, Temp. Agency staff are still being used. • Management will follow-up with Human Resources to determine why the request for an extension for temp. agency staff has not been made. • Management noted that internal reviews of the Special Diets Allowance decision will be made by the office who made the initial decision. • Management will be sending Special Diets Unit manual to the local offices. • Union asked if overtime hours are part of the contingency plan. • Management responded that this may be looked at as a strategy. 	<p>Management will follow-up with Human Resources to determine why the request for an extension for temp. agency staff has not been made.</p>
3.5	Draft Communication Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union has received and reviewed Draft Communications Protocol. 	<p>Union has reviewed Draft Communications Protocol and will provide feedback to Management in writing.</p>
Meeting Adjourned			

Approved on June 21, 2011 by:

Original signed by:



 Dylan Lineger
 OPSEU Co-Chair

Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 17, 2011

Original signed by:



 Maxine Daley
 Management Co-Chair