



ISSN 1180-4386

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 38^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 1 February 2007

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 1^{er} février 2007

**Standing committee on
finance and economic affairs**

Pre-budget consultations

**Comité permanent des finances
et des affaires économiques**

Consultations prébudgétaires

Chair: Pat Hoy
Clerk: Douglas Arnott

Président : Pat Hoy
Greffier : Douglas Arnott

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Copies of Hansard

Copies of Hansard can be purchased from Publications Ontario: 880 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. e-mail: webpubont@gov.on.ca

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Exemplaires du Journal

Des exemplaires du Journal sont en vente à Publications Ontario : 880, rue Bay Toronto (Ontario), M7A 1N8 courriel : webpubont@gov.on.ca

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES

Thursday 1 February 2007

Jeudi 1^{er} février 2007

The committee met at 0903 at the Holiday Inn, Barrie.

PREBUDGET CONSULTATIONS

BARRIE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

The Chair (Mr. Pat Hoy): The standing committee on finance and economic affairs will now come to order. The committee is pleased to be in Barrie today. I would ask our first presenters, the Barrie Community Health Centre, to come forward, please.

Good morning. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Ms. Andrea Butcher-Milne: Hi. My name is Andrea Butcher-Milne and I am the chairperson for the Barrie Community Health Centre.

Ms. Carla Palmer: I'm Carla Palmer. I'm the executive director of the Barrie Community Health Centre.

Ms. Butcher-Milne: We made some copies this morning of the presentation, but we didn't realize there would be so many of you. I hope that you can share or at least there can be some further copies made for later. I'm going to just review what we have here because our time is limited and all the information is here within the copy.

Who we are: The Barrie Community Health Centre is one of 54 community health centres—or CHCs, as we fondly refer to them—in the province of Ontario, with an additional 22 new CHCs and 17 satellite sites under development, which we'd like to thank you for.

We are very much a contributor to health care in Barrie. Last year, there were over 100,000 visits to our centre by approximately 8,000 people. Some attended one-to-one visits with a provider—and when I say “provider” I mean a physician, a nurse practitioner, a dietitian, a social worker or a physiotherapist—on many different aspects at the health centre. We have 50 staff on salary. We have two sites as part of our health centre: Barrie and north Innisfil. We have 150 volunteers, who contributed over 17,000 hours of service last year—a fantastic group of people.

Our mandate is to provide community-focused illness prevention, health promotion, and primary health care services, encouraging personal responsibility for one's own health and that of the community. We very much focus on self-care, and we try to teach our clients to take care of themselves, to create a more sustainable health care system.

We want to share with you information about the benefit and value of public dollars to improve health, as well as about the complementary working relationships between community health centres and family health teams, and also key suggestions on furthering the investment in CHCs toward a quality and sustainable health care system.

To give you an example, we'll profile the north Innisfil health service. It is now a satellite site of the Barrie Community Health Centre. I want to describe to you our unique role and contribution to the health care system with this.

The “before” picture for north Innisfil, before it became a satellite for the health centre, was that three physicians were on fee-for-service. They opened and closed their practices a number of times because they weren't sustainable with fee-for-service funding—it's an area with a high number of seniors—so a local residents' group advocated for the health centre to take on a satellite site. Together with the community, we received ongoing funding to sustain primary health care there. The “after” picture is that we have now run the satellite for three years, providing a full-time physician and nurse practitioner.

This site is composed solely of seniors over 60, with 417 active patients; all the stats are here. The point is that seniors now have access to care without having to worry about whether the doors are going to be open or shut when they get there.

What this does for the community is that it reduces avoidable trips to emergency departments, avoidable admissions to hospital and reduced avoidable referrals to specialists. The physician we were able to hire there is actually a geriatric specialist GP, so she has all these things at her fingertips that she can use, and we don't have to send clients to specialists, avoiding costing the health care system money.

We were approached last year by a group in Oro-Medonte. They were going to visit us at a board meeting, and before they came through our doors—just as you are sitting around the room, we were sitting around the room being approached for extra money, as we always are, because we need it. Before they walked in the room, we said, “When this group comes to us, what are we going to say to them? Because we can't serve everybody. We'll have to tell them to come up with a business plan. We'll have to tell them to come up with a plan of advocacy for this satellite site in Oro-Medonte. They'll have to come

in with some commitment to this for us, because we don't have the staffing or the volunteers to be able to do this."

They came in and introduced themselves—they were very polite—and we said, "What can we do for you?" We were astounded because, for a change, someone actually walked in with a binder like this—I'm sorry I don't have a copy for you. They had gone through the demographics of Oro-Medonte. They have secured from their council \$50,000 to open an office for the CHC if we were to obtain a satellite. They covered off a business plan, and they have a possible commitment for physicians to work in this type of satellite site. It was astounding to us. We'd never had a group present to us in that manner, so we felt compelled to speak with you today about that.

There is not one physician in all of Oro-Medonte, yet it has a population of 20,000 people. They've never had a physician's office there, and they are looking to us to help with that.

In our budget, we have also requested a satellite site for the community mental health association here in Barrie for our most vulnerable members of society: people with serious mental health problems. We believe we are the right people to be able to help them provide that, because we have our systems in place for that.

0910

We provide complementary working relationships between the community health centre and family health teams. We are working together at this time. We have been involved with the start-up of the family health team. We provide accessible programs, in kind, every year. We provide pre- and post-natal counselling; midwifery services; the Breatheasy education series, one for children and one for adults; diabetes education and management; and funding support for refugee and immigrants for diagnostic and specialist care. All of this is in-kind support to the family health team, the city of Barrie and surrounding areas. That is part of our budget: \$1.766 million every year that we provide.

Key suggestions on furthering the investment toward quality care:

- support access to care by people who do not have family doctors through additional CHCs or satellites;

- support the continued co-operation between agencies in the health care system by assuring parity of salaries for all interdisciplinary team members.

When I say that, there is a high level of co-operation between the CHCs and the family health teams; however, there is a threat that the salary discrepancies between the various organizations could lead to staff recruitment and retention problems, especially in the community sector. The nurse practitioner and the dietitian in the family health team are going to be paid more just for working in a family health team as opposed to a community health centre. That is a threat to us.

With an annual budget of about \$3 million for 100,000 visits per year, CHCs provide high-quality primary health care for less than the cost of a Tim Hortons coffee per person per day.

Thank you very much for providing us this opportunity to present today.

The Chair: Thank you. This round of questioning will go to the official opposition.

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): Thank you for your presentation. I think I can speak on behalf of all the committee members and say that we're delighted to be here in Barrie today and we're looking forward to hearing the views of the people of this area and the broader area of Simcoe county. I guess there are some provincial presentations that are going to be coming forward today too, when I look at the list of presentations.

You really only had 15 minutes to summarize your comments, but you've done a great job of outlining what your organization is all about and what you've been able to achieve. I was wondering, how long has the community health centre been in existence in Barrie?

Ms. Butcher-Milne: For 17 years.

Mr. Arnott: So you've got an excellent track record. I believe in the community health centre model too. I was wondering if you could just summarize again for the sake of the committee the ways in which the community health centre model improves upon the more traditional models of health care delivery.

Ms. Butcher-Milne: It improves on it because it's so well-rounded. I like to use my own personal experience. I have MS, and the way I came into the health centre was through an exercise class that the health care centre was providing. They've changed that model now to an eight-week module. It's called the self-help management system where someone would come in through the health centre—say, if they were diagnosed with an illness such as MS or arthritis or fibromyalgia or something like that—for an eight-week course and it uses all of our disciplines. A nurse may come in one week to talk about healthy living or exercise, a physiotherapist would come in and show you how to do some exercise programs, a dietician would show you how to eat properly to maintain proper health, a social worker would come in and do the mental health bit with you.

It's a well-rounded, holistic approach to health care. We find that it prevents further uses of the health care system. If you've already been set up to understand how to deal with stress, then you're avoiding a further visit to a psychiatrist or a further visit to a social worker, which would be additional stress on the health care system. So we actually save money.

Ms. Palmer: If I could just add to that, in the community health centre model, as Andrea had mentioned at the beginning, all staff are on salary. The difference between that and the fee-for-service model or the family health team model is that the providers focus on the service. There's a management infrastructure that supports what they do working together as a team.

That's quite important for a lot of the female medical providers who wish to work part-time and who would not survive financially in the fee-for-service or family health team model. So it's very attractive to them.

The other key difference is that it's community-governed, so it has a board of directors that's accountable to the community and the decisions are therefore responsive to the community's needs. The north Innisfil example or the Oro-Medonte example are good for that. In both cases, they've had difficulty attracting providers. Now there is an entity, a board, that will ensure that their cause is advocated for and that if a physician leaves, there's an infrastructure again to attract new providers.

Mr. Arnott: The government in the last couple of years has spent a lot of money setting up a new health care bureaucracy that we call local health integration networks. How has that worked here? Have you seen any improvements to your budget or to the service that you are able to provide to your clientele as a result of this new health care bureaucracy that the government has created?

Ms. Butcher-Milne: I can speak to that. We became very involved in the local health integration networks. We made sure that we were at the table every step of the way. We've actually helped write part of the integrated health service plan; we helped write two parts of the section for this area. So far, it hasn't changed—until April. But what we have found is that there's a freer communication that we may have had, a different kind of communication. Being used to the community health centre branch, I'm used to community-governed and I'm finding that this feels more community-governed for now.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

COLEMAN CARE CENTRE

The Chair: Would the Coleman Care Centre please come forward? Good morning. You have 10 minutes for your presentation, and there could be up to five minutes of questioning. I would ask you to identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Ms. Deborah Wall-Armstrong: My name is Deborah Wall-Armstrong, and I'm the president of the Coleman Care Centre. With me today is Lorraine Jelly, the administrator for our home, which is a 112-bed long-term-care facility with 115 staff. We've been providing compassionate care to frail, elderly residents with developmental disabilities in the Barrie area for over 25 years. I'm here today to request your support for more time to provide the care, programs and services that enhance the quality of care and quality of life for the residents of the Coleman Care Centre and for other long-term-care facilities.

Last spring, our family and residents' council supported a petition requesting funding for more time for resident care. They did this because, although they see the staff doing their best, they also see that they are run off their feet just doing the minimum that residents require.

Others working in our health care sector can also see those situations. I recently read the president of the OMA's report from January 23 updating Ontario doctors.

He commented, "The current problems for long-term care are in large part due to inadequate funding."

Let me give you an example of this. At mealtime, we strive to assist residents with each course of their meal within five minutes of each course being served. This is the government standard. In our home, about 85% to 90% of our residents need some assistance and between 45% to 50% of them need total assistance. So depending on the meal, we have between 12 to 16 nursing staff to provide assistance to about 100 residents.

The residents need more. They deserve more. We want to do more. In fact, we believe we should be doing more to help hospitals with their waiting lists, but we can't. Hospital patients waiting for placement in long-term care with high-risk behavioural issues, which are not uncommon with an Alzheimer resident, require more nursing staff to manage the behaviour safely. In our frail resident population, we can only manage a small number of these residents at any one time. Residents being admitted with severe skin ulcers require significantly more registered nursing staff time. With limited funding, we can only assume a few of these residents at any one time.

0920

The reason why we cannot do more for residents is simple: Our operating funding has not kept pace with the trend of increasing care needs. Last year alone, provincial resident acuity levels increased by 3.15% on average. In our home alone it increased 3.28%. Cumulatively, since 1992 the increase in our sector has been over 27% in acuity. In our home alone we have seen an 8.65% increase in acuity since 2004. Also in our home, over the last five years, our case mix index on which we're funded has been over 100 in four of the last five years. Our CMI for this year is 101.4, which is up from 101.08 in 2005.

The last significant base funding increase was the \$116 million announced in the 2004 budget. With our share of that funding, we were able just to remain status quo. We had already spoken to our staff at the home and said that we were at the point of having to look at cutting jobs with it. We were hoping that the government would look at an increase on it and we hung in for an extra couple of months. Some places had already given notices to their staff with it. With the base funding adjustments since, all we have been able to do is remain status quo, with each department challenged to find efficiencies wherever possible. As we try to streamline some things, such as the paperwork, so that we have more time with the residents, we are also being asked by government to do more—provide more reports, more surveys.

The government has provided us with other target funding which has allowed us to purchase lifts, diagnostic equipment and computers so we can computerize our resident charts. These are valuable initiatives, but they do not enable us to add more staff to provide more resident hands-on care.

With the current resident acuity levels, homes should be able to provide at least three hours of care per resident per day. With the current government funding, homes are only able to provide on average 2.5 hours per resident per

day. If our home was in Manitoba or Saskatchewan, residents would be getting the average of three hours of daily care they need. In Alberta or New Brunswick, they would be reassured by a government commitment to get 3.5 hours of daily care.

Today I am asking for your support in requesting the government to commit the funding in the 2007-08 budget that is required to address that 30-minute care gap. That would mean \$390 million, or \$14.27 per resident per day, to fund an additional 20 minutes of care in 2007, and \$214 million, or \$7.81 per resident per day, to fund 10 more minutes of care in 2008. All of the details on that request were outlined by our association, the Ontario Long Term Care Association, which I believe gave a presentation to this committee in December.

With our allocation of the funding, in our home we estimate that we would be adding more registered nursing staff time and restorative care time with additional personal service worker hours. Within this total increase, the raw food funding should be increased from \$5.46 to \$7 per resident per day. This would enable us to increase the quality of the food we purchase for our residents, such as more fresh fruit and more tender cuts of meat.

As you may know, our funding either comes directly from the government for nursing, programs and food, or is directly controlled by the government through the setting of rates for resident co-payments. We use resident funding for accommodation services such as administration, housekeeping, laundry, dietary staff, utilities and general building maintenance. When funding in this envelope doesn't keep pace with our operating costs, the services we pay for out of this envelope suffer. For example, with our 25-plus-year-old building, any type of major maintenance has to be targeted over many years, unless it's an emergency. Our re-roofing and floor replacements have been done in stages over the last eight years and are ongoing. Our phone system upgrade was delayed for over six years until it was almost an emergency; we're now replacing it. Proactive preventative maintenance is almost impossible to carry out.

Over the past three years, our revenue-cost gap in this envelope has been widening. For example, our utility costs have seen an increase of 30% in our gas rate from 2004 to date and as much as 25% in our water rates in the same time period. They're expected to grow by a further 10% annually over the next two years. If this revenue-cost gap is not addressed, it will affect the resident services I just noted. We're not asking the government to raise the resident copayment rates beyond the annual inflationary adjustment. Instead, within that total funding request, we're asking the government to allocate \$2.75 per resident per day to help us maintain our laundry, housekeeping and other services—services which I can assure you are very important to our residents and their families. We're doing our part to reduce, where financially feasible, our energy consumption, but there is only so much that can be done with limited resources. We need our government partner to support us.

The upcoming budget will play a pivotal role in determining whether we'll be able to make gains towards

the care our residents need or whether we'll begin to slip back from where we are now. Another year of maintenance level funding is just not good enough. A substantial funding increase that adds 20 minutes more care this year and 10 minutes more care next year is required to provide the care residents need, expect and deserve. This is without even considering our increased costs to implement the additional paperwork and processes that are going to be required as outlined currently in the proposed new Long Term Care Homes Act.

We're a C facility. It was encouraging for us to see the unanimous support for Elizabeth Witmer's recent motion calling on the government to commit to a capital renewal program for B and C homes. Our 112 residents are among the 35,000 residents in B and C facilities throughout Ontario who don't have access to the same levels of physical comfort, privacy and dignity as this government is helping to fund for residents in the new and recently developed homes. For example, our washrooms are not large enough to allow full wheelchair turning. We do not have the smaller on-unit dining areas for resident use that the newer homes are able to offer. The smaller dining areas are much more home-like and far less institutional. And we still have four-bed wards—four people in a room—whereas in the new facilities, the most that they have in their rooms are two residents under the new guidelines.

With an aging population, increasing resident and family expectations and the research that shows that physical designs impact a home's ability to provide for care of residents with dementia, the time has come to address this double standard. All the residents, whether they're in an A, B or C facility, pay the same fee. About half get less value for their money.

We understand that this cannot be accomplished overnight. However, we need to get started with a commitment from the government to provide \$9.5 million in this budget to support the renewal of the first 2,500 B and C beds, and to continue this process in a planned and rational manner annually until the job is done. Our home would be one of the early applicants to look at doing a renewal. We've already been looking at those kinds of things in the past in hopes that we would see a program, but we haven't seen it.

Again, I want to thank you for your time. We'd be pleased to answer any of your questions.

The Chair: Thank you. This round of questioning goes to the NDP and Mr. Prue.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York): Thank you very much for your deputation. We have seen similar deputations in other places, but it's always good to bring it right home to your own home, where you work, and to your community.

Can you tell me how much more in additional funding would be required to bring the services up to the standards that you're requesting?

Ms. Wall-Armstrong: I think we spelled it out here on the—

Mr. Prue: You gave a whole bunch of things altogether. You said \$2.75 for laundry.

Ms. Wall-Armstrong: No. The total that we're asking for is the \$390 million—that's in 2007—and another \$214 million in 2008. The things that I was talking about—the food allocation with it, the amount for maintenance on it—are all included in that amount. So that's \$14.27 per resident per day in 2007 and it's \$7.81 per resident per day in 2008.

0930

Mr. Prue: The government, in the last election, promised \$6,000 per resident. How much of that have you seen?

Ms. Wall-Armstrong: Our issues on there were that the \$6,000 was an indirect to the residents. There have been a lot of special programs, as we pointed out here, but they have gone for specific things like lifts or—

Interjection: Diagnostic and medical equipment.

Ms. Wall-Armstrong: Yes, diagnostic and medical equipment. But we haven't seen that \$6,000 per resident.

Mr. Prue: I'm surprised that you are only looking for \$9.5 million in this budget to support the renewal of the B and C beds. Some of the facilities—and I've not seen yours—some of the C facilities in this province, are definitely not up to standard. They definitely should be replaced pretty fast. I'm not saying that about yours, but maybe yours is there too. Why such a small amount?

Ms. Wall-Armstrong: I'd like to see it done faster myself, but I think the whole concept was to try and look at a renewal program that was doable over a period of years that would see some homes coming on each year. I guess one of the issues we have about all the rebuilds and the D facilities that are being rebuilt is that you have a group of them at one point in time and they'll all age the same. So the idea with this program—this was really a discussion that we had through our association—would be to bring something forward that was potentially doable by government on a regular basis each year so that we would have always on hand renewed facilities with it. So you're not looking at a huge amount of money being asked every 20 or 25 years with it but that there would be a constant product.

Mr. Prue: But clearly and surely, and you have made the case yourself, if people living in facilities that are not at the same standard as the A facilities pay the same amount, they should expect the same service, and it doesn't seem to me to make a lot of sense to be repairing an old facility that is going to have to be replaced anyway. You've said the same, that you don't do the maintenance and the roof and the floors. Would it not make more sense for the government, instead of doing that kind of maintenance, to simply put forward more money?

Ms. Wall-Armstrong: We would like to see all of them done as soon as possible, but the issue, I think, is the practicality as to whether you have the resources to do that all the time. I would hope that when we're looking at the amount of \$2,500 a year, one of the criteria would be those that are most in need of being repaired or replaced. For example ours, with four-bed wards, I would hope would be one of the top priorities in any renewal by

the government: to remove the four-bed wards. Many of the provinces don't have it. I think Manitoba is down to 50 beds in the whole province that are set in four-bed wards with it. Ontario is one of the ones that still have these. It doesn't provide privacy for the residents in the facility. It's a problem when you're having people with behaviours—more people in the room with them can cause difficulty. We've seen in the newspapers even recently where people can be attacked, and some have been killed, by their roommates. We're talking about aggressive personalities that you have with it, and they're not assisted by living in conditions where you have four-bed wards. We're constantly having to manage who is with which resident on it and when you see behaviours coming out in residents.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

GREATER BARRIE HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

The Chair: Would the Greater Barrie Home Builders Association come forward, please. Good morning. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There could be up to five minutes of questioning, and I would ask you to identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Mr. Matthew Pryce: Mr. Chair, members of the committee, good morning. My name is Matthew Pryce. I am the president of the Greater Barrie Home Builders Association. I have been involved in the residential construction industry for 18 years and am the president of Prycon Custom Building and Renovations.

The Greater Barrie Home Builders Association is proud to be affiliated with the Ontario Home Builders' Association and the Canadian Home Builders' Association. I'm sure you have heard and know the stats of our industry. We represent over 5% of the provincial GDP and contribute over \$25 billion to the economy every year. It's because of this contribution that we offer an important perspective for the provincial budget.

As a volunteer member in the association, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. The Greater Barrie Home Builders Association and its 115 member companies represent all aspects of our industry, from land development, building, subtrades and suppliers to the sales, service, warranty and financing of homes. I can assure you that we take our roles very seriously, because we provide more than a product, we provide homes, the very heart of our communities and the families who live here. Over the past three years, our local association and its members have contributed over and above the economics of our business. In 2004, our association built a house from the ground up in 57 hours, a project named "Build for the Cure." This was not just any house. The donated material, the volunteers, our own professional members and many upgrades made this the house that love built. At least, that's what the purchasers called it. Proceeds from the sale of this home provided over \$200,000 to the regional cancer care centre. Over the last

two years, an additional \$60,000 has been raised to give back to the community from which we make our livings. Some of the groups benefiting from these fundraisers have been Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Grieving Children at Seasons Centre, Lake Simcoe phosphorus reduction program, and our own Royal Victoria Hospital. Again I say we take our responsibility very seriously.

Locally, our building stats are about 40% lower than last year and down almost 50% from the peak in 2002. This is due, for the most part, to the lack of developable lands in the greater Barrie area even though services are available. Areas to the south, the north and the west of us have had modest gains. Herein lies a serious issue. This area is designated as a growth area in the Places to Grow document. As such, it is estimated that the number of households in Simcoe county will increase to a projected 226,300 from 162,000 in 2006. That's households, not population. Where are these families going to live? That question prompted the following concerns, which we've been asked by our membership to bring to you.

(1) The need for an implementation of growth strategies in the municipalities surrounding Barrie in Simcoe county to make certain that serviced lots are available on a continuing basis. This will also help to keep the price of residential lots under control.

(2) Development charges: As an industry, we recognize the need for development charges. In this area particularly, DCs will be important to provide funding for the expected growth. We have never been against paying our fair share of the costs of this growth. As a matter of fact, studies have found that the total taxes, fees and charges paid by a homebuyer are up to 30% of the cost of a new home. Development charges represent a substantial portion of these fees. In our area, the county has recently jumped on the bandwagon with a development charge of its own, and it is rumoured that financing of hospitals may become a function of development charges as well. Clearly, this is not a proper function of municipal development charges. We respectfully ask that the province consider implementing a third party, independent peer review process for DC background studies as well as an independent audit process to ensure that the development charges are properly spent. A case in point: Part of the levy increases has been to build schools. Access to public schools in this area is a helpful selling tool. One such school was supposed to be constructed in 2002. The levies have been collected, yet in 2007 there has been no groundbreaking.

0940

(3) It's obvious that infrastructure improvements have been a priority for your government, and we applaud you for that. Projected growth will require further infrastructure improvements and development. We see the province's role to assist Simcoe county to develop a regional servicing—water and sanitary sewer—infrastructure to replace the hodgepodge of servicing in the various smaller communities and townships. This will allow implementation of the province's overall growth policies and assist smaller communities to expand their boundaries over time, rather than allow scattered growth

in rural areas. Further infrastructure needs would be improved public transit between Barrie and Toronto.

(4) The underground economy is an ever-increasing threat to the viability of our businesses and the protection of our customers. One of the issues that Bill 124 has created in this area is that it allows homeowners to submit their own drawings, with which they can acquire permits. The homeowner is put in the position, unwittingly, of being the front man and provides underground contractors a way to avoid certification. This has added fuel to the underground economy.

(5) Bill 124 and the requirements as to the timing of permit approvals have created problems for our industry. One of our members works with eight different municipalities and reports that the smaller, less staffed municipalities are able to stay within the 10-day turnaround time for a permit with a completed application, while some municipalities will not even accept the application unless the builder signs a waiver freeing the municipality from the 10-day time limit. Additionally, some municipalities have deemed that a completed application must include zoning and planning approvals, which may be separate and require up to 20 weeks to acquire. As an association, we'd like to thank Alan Wells and his staff for helping to facilitate communication with one of our municipalities in this regard.

(6) At a recent dinner meeting, a representative from CSAO told our members that the employer is considered guilty in areas of job-site accidents and fatalities. Given the tremendous strides made in this area by professionals in our industry, this is unacceptable. Health and safety committees, industry experts and private health and safety contractors, as well as training and clearly stated expectations, can provide evidence of due diligence. An automatic assumption of guilt and monies required to defend such a position could easily be avoided with investigation and the recognition of personal accountability prior to blame and charges.

(7) As a provincial and local association, we do not support mandatory WSIB coverage for independent operators, sole proprietors, partners and executive officers carrying on business in a corporation. Being unable to claim the benefits under the current rules, these owners have purchased their own insurance. In essence, this mandatory coverage would mean paying twice for something that they cannot benefit from. We recommend maintaining the current legislative framework.

The Chair: You have about a minute left for your presentation.

Mr. Pryce: In closing, I would like to reiterate our desire to work with government of all levels. We bring to the table our expertise and our substantial contributions to all levels of the provincial economy. I cannot stress enough how important preparation and investment are for the growth that will hit this area in the near future. Together we are partners in providing the most basic of needs for families: homes.

I would like to thank you for your attention and interest in my presentation. I am open to any comments or questions you may have.

The Chair: Thank you. This round goes to the government.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge): Good morning, Matthew.

Mr. Pryce: Good morning.

Mr. Arthurs: Thank you for the presentation as well. I believe I'll explore with you just a bit more the issue of growth. Obviously, Barrie will be a growth area. The concern I have is the capacity, when you're talking about availability of serviced lots, Are you talking about the OPA's urban envelope as such? Are you looking for an expansion, ultimately, on the urban envelope?

I'm also interested, in addition to that, in the whole issue of water and sewer capacity. Unless we have the basic underpinnings of development capacity—water and sewer capacity and road capacity—then building becomes a non-starter. You can build a house, but if you can't plug it into something, then it's not much use to you.

Mr. Pryce: The services that are in the city of Barrie limits are capable and are in place at this point right to the city limits. Without a common ground between Simcoe county and the adjoining municipalities that border the Barrie area and the ability to sit down and negotiate the shared servicing issues, it becomes very difficult for these municipalities to act on their own.

Mr. Arthurs: Do you see Alan Wells as being helpful in doing that? You mentioned Alan's name earlier, about some work he had done.

Mr. Pryce: Alan Wells was introduced to us through the Ontario Home Builders' Association and the lack of communication and ability to acquire permits in an adjoining town to the city of Barrie. He was fundamental in implementing a meeting where we could sit down as an association and as representation of the builders in our association to share and discuss some of the concerns that we had.

Mr. Arthurs: I know Alan from his days as CAO in York region, so he certainly understands both the administrative side of development, York being a fast-growing community overall, and the private sector needs in trying to get the job done.

Those would be the questions I was most interested in. The issue with the capacity for growth primarily, then, rests with budding municipalities, and work with the region in getting agreements in place to free up the service capacity for growth.

Mr. Pryce: Absolutely.

Mr. Arthurs: Thank you for your presentation.

The Chair: Mrs. Mitchell, we have time for a quick question.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): Just a quick question, so that I have a level of understanding. For the identifiable growth area, you made specific reference to Simcoe county. Are there plans in place right now for the expansion of Barrie's sewage and water into Simcoe?

Mr. Pryce: The city of Barrie over the last number of years has prepared for this growth, and their services are capable of supporting the growth for this area to the south of us.

Mrs. Mitchell: And within Simcoe county, do their plans speak to service alliances being formed?

Mr. Pryce: As of yet, I don't believe the conversation has been addressed.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for the presentation.

BARRIE PROVINCIAL LIBERAL ASSOCIATION

The Chair: I call on the Barrie Provincial Liberal Association to come forward, please.

Mr. Doug Jure: Good morning. Welcome to Barrie.

The Chair: Good morning. Just let me introduce the rules here. I know you've heard them. You have 10 minutes for your presentation, and there are five minutes remaining for possible questions. Please identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Mr. Jure: My name is Doug Jure and I'm president of the Barrie Provincial Liberal Association. With me are two senior directors of our association, Sylvia Humphries and Connie Spek. We appreciate you giving us this opportunity to appear before you this morning to participate in your prebudget consultations.

The government's first budget set three priorities: reinvesting in our public education system, addressing critical shortcomings in our health care system, and promoting economic growth. Last year's budget added a priority, our transportation infrastructure, by allocating \$1.2 billion to the Move Ontario program for the expansion of public transit and construction and refurbishment of roads and bridges. The underlying fiscal imperative is to systematically achieve balanced budgets by restoring public services, not cutting them; by investing in our communities, not downloading services that the property tax system is not meant to fund.

Under these circumstances, we understand that the demands on the government to address problems on the revenue side of the ledger are just as daunting as those demands on the expenditure side. Our recommendations are made in the context of what it takes to build a better community here in Barrie.

0950

Committee members know very well that too often a community's character is described by an event or a slogan that does not reflect its true nature. The honourable member from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant well knows that there is more to the town of Port Dover than the arrival of bikers every Friday the 13th. Similarly, the popular slogan "Gateway to cottage country" used to describe Barrie is deceptive.

In reality, Barrie is home to 131,000 persons, and more Ontarians are choosing Barrie as their new home every year. It is a community where 26% of the households earn more than \$100,000 annually, ranking Barrie the sixth-highest income area in Canada. We have a diverse economy comprised of manufacturing, education, health services, and tourism and recreation sectors. We are endowed with an educated and skilled workforce, a

factor critical for ensuring prosperity during the restructuring of Ontario's manufacturing sector and the emergence of the knowledge-based economy.

Barrie is a centre for educational excellence. Georgian College, graduating over 2,000 students annually, offers extensive technical and engineering programs that are customized for our businesses, and partnerships with York University, Laurentian University and the University of Windsor offer degree-granting status in selected fields of study. Barrie has a regional health centre—the Royal Victoria Hospital—with over 200 skilled physicians, 1,800 caring staff members and 1,100 dedicated volunteers who deliver cancer care, surgical services, critical care, mental health rehabilitation services, as well as women's and children's programs. And finally, Barrie has the recreation and cultural amenities necessary for an attractive and pleasing lifestyle, including abundant parkland, the MacLaren Art Centre, the Gryphon Theatre, and the Barrie Molson Centre.

As mentioned just earlier, Barrie's economy is now oriented southward. Our city has been designated under the Places to Grow Act as a growth node in the greater Golden Horseshoe region. Significantly, this plan places Barrie in an urban context and in doing so recognizes that the challenges facing Barrie are not unlike those facing other cities throughout our province.

In this context, the budget should construct a fiscal framework for the government to address the outstanding challenges to Barrie's prosperity and the intrinsic quality of our lifestyle. These challenges, from our perspective, include:

- managing our forest and water systems and diverting e-waste from our landfill;
- attracting more family physicians to our community;
- resolving Georgian College's budget deficit;
- fixing Barrie's five Highway 400 interchanges;
- modifying the property tax system and returning it to its original purpose; and
- further financial support for the MacLaren Art Centre.

The unseasonably warm weather we experienced up to just a few weeks ago illustrated just how global warming can change the way we live and work. Although we do not mind shovelling less snow from our sidewalks and driveways, we find it disconcerting that so far rain fall has exceeded snow fall, and our traditional skiing and ice fishing recreational activities, so important to our economy, just got underway. In this context, there is increasing awareness that our government must further its commitment to restoring and protecting our environment.

We make two recommendations with respect to the management of our forest and water systems and to the diversion of e-waste from landfill. We urge the government to restore funding and staffing to the Ministry of Natural Resources to protect our forests and water systems because municipalities lack the long-term resources to deal with these critical responsibilities that affect not only the quality of our environment, but our

agricultural, tourism and recreational activities. And municipalities should be mandated to divert discarded cell phones, computer and telecommunications equipment—referred to as “e-waste”—from landfill to reusable components through recycling. Right here in Barrie, Barrie Metals through its subsidiary, Global Electric Electronic Processing, has developed the technical and processing techniques to do just that.

The government must not let-up on its work to place more family physicians in communities like Barrie, where it is estimated that some 25% of our population are orphan patients.

Much has been accomplished by the government and our community. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's \$3-million investment to shorten wait times at the Royal Victoria Hospital for key surgeries and procedures, including hip and knee replacements, cataract, cancer and MRI exams, has produced demonstrable results. MRI test wait time has been reduced to seven weeks from 54 weeks just two years ago.

The I Believe fundraising campaign set a \$30-million goal to finance the needed hospital expansion, which includes the Simcoe-Muskoka Regional Cancer Centre, and it is two-thirds of the way there. This achievement makes evident the commitment of our community to health care services, and we expect the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to play its part.

We cannot emphasize enough the value of Georgian College's contribution to Barrie's prosperity, particularly during the current restructuring of the provincial manufacturing sector. Georgian's imminent \$2-million budget deficit, the first in its history, must be remedied by the government.

Georgian College is under pressure to meet dramatically increasing student enrolment. The college is forecasting growth of 40% in apprenticeships and the skilled trades, building on a 38% increase last year. Georgian was among the top four colleges in Ontario for percentage enrolment growth between 2001 and 2005, more than doubling the system average.

Through its Institute of University Partnerships and Advanced Studies, Georgian's degree studies enrolment, excluding Georgian's own two bachelor degree programs, has grown at an average growth rate of 268% in each of the past five years, with approximately 1,000 students currently enrolled in degree studies through the Laurentian University partnership alone.

While the government's Reaching Higher plan represents real progress in correcting more than 15 years of underfunding, Ontario's community colleges will continue to be the lowest-funded of the 10 provinces in per-student college funding and will continue to operate with less per-student revenue than either secondary schools or universities across Canada.

Georgian College does not have a cost problem; it has a revenue problem. Comparing grant and tuition revenue against costs in full-time salary and benefits increases for the next two years, Georgian will have a net financial shortfall of \$2 million in this academic year, increasing to \$7 million next year.

The tripartite project to bring back GO service this year and the \$2.1-million gas tax fund allocation to expand Barrie public transit represent strategic investments required to fix our transportation infrastructure. However, our transportation infrastructure, starting with the five Highway 400 interchanges, must be fixed, and the government must set Barrie as a priority. Barrie's road network, not unlike other communities in the greater Golden Horseshoe region, is congested. Retail power centres in south Barrie are jammed with traffic. Similarly, Highway 400 is congested throughout the week as Barrie residents commute southward to their jobs and Ontarians travel northward to their cottages. Pending developments at Park Place and the former Barrie Raceway and Fairground will place further pressure on our transportation system.

Our property tax system should be modified to take the financial pressure off property owners who are on fixed incomes, to revitalize our downtown neighbourhood commercial district and, most important of all, to return the property tax system to its original purpose. Too many property owners on fixed incomes, particularly seniors, cannot afford to live in their homes, their only homes, because of ever-increasing property taxes. We propose that these individuals be eligible for a long-term property tax freeze. The difference between the frozen and the regular, unfrozen tax payments would be paid to the municipality at the time of the sale of their homes.

To revitalize our downtown district by attracting and retaining small business through the incentive of reasonable realty taxes, we recommend the introduction of a neighbourhood commercial property class. This property class would encompass two- to three-storey streetfront buildings that comprise downtown shopping districts throughout our province. The tax rate applied to this class would be determined by a community's tax affordability.

Further, to relieve the pressure on the city's property tax system, the principal source of revenue for the city, we recommend that the government reverse the down-loaded social services programs. As the consultations initiated by the Premier last August with the municipalities proceed, let us remember that the property tax system was originally intended to pay for police, fire and emergency response services; parks and recreational facilities; garbage collection; parking enforcement; road maintenance; and snow removal.

Last, for local art centres such as our MacLaren Art Centre, recent federal government cutbacks are a serious threat to their viability. Although the Ontario Arts Council is fair and equitable in its funding of arts institutions across the province, we recommend increased core funding for the MacLaren Art Centre. This will expand the Laurentian University/Georgian College School of Design and Visual Arts by moving the facility into the downtown core as part of our downtown's revitalization, so critical to Barrie's lifestyle and sense of community.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, Barrie is not the gateway to somewhere else. Barrie is Ontario's 12th-largest city, and

we are facing the fast-emerging challenges that began over a decade ago.

Our recommendations for building a better community deal with the government's priorities for the environment, health services, education, transportation, a fair property tax system, and culture. Much has been accomplished, but there is more to be done, and that requires more financial resources. Balancing the revenue side of the budget ledger with the expenditure side is a difficult task. Nevertheless, we are all involved in the competition for limited resources, and we have laid out this morning our priorities for building a better community here in Barrie. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. The questioning goes to the official opposition.

Mr. Arnott: I want to thank the delegation for their presentation. Our caucus doesn't have any questions.

The Chair: There being no questions, we thank you for the presentation.

1000

SIMCOE MUSKOKA
CATHOLIC DISTRICT
SCHOOL BOARD

The Chair: Would the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board please come forward. Good morning, gentlemen. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Mr. Rick Maloney: My name Rick Maloney. I'm chairperson of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board. With me are our director of education, Mr. Michael O'Keefe, and Mr. Peter Derochie, the associate director of education, business and finance. I'm also joined by Mr. John Grisé, our vice-chair of the board. We have provided each of you with a detailed brief that on occasion I will reference during my presentation today.

Thank you for the opportunity to present today on these very important issues that I wish to speak about. Before I begin on these, though, on behalf of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, our communities, our families and, most importantly, our students, I wish to thank and acknowledge the government's action to improve the quality of education for Ontario's students. The strategies and alternatives, including focus on peace and stability, literacy, numeracy, student success and good places to learn, have been supported with the necessary funding and have achieved improved success for Ontario's and our students. There are, however, many priorities in supporting the quality education strategy that, if not addressed immediately, will impact continued improvement in all these areas.

In order to continue to support the success that has been achieved in education in Ontario and our board, and as well to ensure stability and sustained improvement for 2007 and beyond, we see the following areas as requiring immediate funding attention, and I will speak on each of

these points individually: declining-enrolment pressures; special education; benchmarks; flexibility for local needs; transportation; and capital.

As well, we need the grants to be released in March to make the best decisions for our communities and pupils. I have personally heard Minister Wynne make that commitment and hopefully the government will stand by that.

Declining enrolment: The graph on page 3 of our submission presents a picture that is very similar to most boards in the province. In the past three years, our board has experienced an overall decline in 36 of the 51 schools. Specifically, there was a decline in 35 of our 42 elementary schools but growth in the secondary panel. The decline has not been dramatic nor concentrated enough to reduce school-based and overhead expenditures, those being teachers, supports, custodial, operating, utilities, transportation and administration. However, the offsetting increase in secondary enrolment disqualifies the board for eligible declining enrolment grants. If these grants were determined on a panel basis—that being elementary and secondary separately—relief would better be matched to the expenditure patterns. It is not possible to mitigate the expenditure burden experienced by decline in elementary schools while supporting growth pressures in our secondary schools.

The pattern of enrolment change by panel for our board also impacts the new pupil grants and our board's potential ability to service debt already incurred in the long term. The Ministry of Education's policy on school closures and amalgamations over the past few years has presented a barrier for boards and reduced their ability to respond as needed.

There needs to be sustainable and fair funding established for the long term to support the impact of declining enrolment and immediate relief for boards to ensure that our students and communities are served by their community school.

Special education: On pages 5 and 6 of our submission, we present some revealing statistics or indicators that help explain the pressure on the special education budget for our board in particular, but are indicative of the pressure many boards face. High-needs enrolment is up 14.3%, while total enrolment has been flat for the period presented. I draw your attention to the explosive growth in the service of students with specialized equipment.

High-needs per-pupil funding has decreased by 2.7%, and if you discount for inflation, high-needs funding has dropped by almost 9%.

There is a problem with the local scene and related funding. Our coterminous boards receive \$115 and \$268 less per pupil for high needs. Across the province, the incidence and funding may vary, but locally it should be the same.

High-needs students who transfer between boards do not transfer with their high-needs funding. It remains in the funding for the board where the approval was gained. That is a win for the old board and a significant and

unfair pressure, or loss, for the new, receiving board. Portability of these grants must be reinstated to relieve Simcoe Muskoka Catholic of the unfair burden which results when students transfer.

Special education funding has been an outstanding funding reform since the amalgamations of school boards in 1997. The promised special education funding reform needs to be addressed immediately.

The current special education per pupil amount, or SEPPA, decreases as the pupil ages, yet experience and incidence in boards find that the costs of supporting students with special needs does not follow the same pattern; costs at least remain the same. In 2006-07, the SEPPA for a JK student is \$623 and decreases to \$303, a 51% decrease, for a grade 12 student.

Benchmarks: The school board sector, over the past few years, has had a strong concern around the funding benchmark issue. There has been improved alignment of funding for teachers' salaries only. There are many significant funding benchmarks that are not aligned with expenditure patterns in school boards. Alignments are also needed for employee benefits, non-teaching salaries, preparation time for teachers, construction costs and primary class size operating and capital costs. Funding realistic benchmarks is the responsibility of the province, as it is the province that sets the labour frameworks for boards. The increased control exercised and influenced through the government's education funding policy and accountability framework has eroded the flexibility boards have.

Flexibility for local needs: Although considerably more dollars are flowing to boards, two significant problems remain:

(1) Inadequate benchmarks in areas such as student transportation, special education and capital construction have not been addressed.

(2) Because much of the additional funding has been enveloped for use in implementing specific initiatives, boards do not have the flexibility to allocate these funds within their budget in a manner that best meets their local budget needs.

Lack of flexibility within the model can be particularly problematic for Catholic school boards, which must fund those aspects of their program that are distinctively Catholic from regular ministry allocations, examples being secondary school chaplains, adult faith animators, school chapels, student retreats, religion resources and materials. Elimination of the local priorities grant further reduces the boards' flexibility.

Transportation: Provincially, school boards are experiencing different challenges to maintain adequate transportation services. The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board has been successfully involved in shared transportation services with both of our coterminous boards for many years. Collectively, the three boards have achieved many improvements and efficiencies through these creative and innovative strategies and have improved service for our students. A new model for transportation must be found to address the operating

funding and the risks that boards are exposed to. The model should provide sufficient funds to ensure a reasonable level of service. The allocations must be fair and non-discriminatory.

Capital: The funding for construction, repairs and renewal, including primary class size reduction, current and new program requirements, needs to be in place immediately. The flexibility available to boards prior to the Good Places to Learn program is gone. The funding approved is not considerate of current market and regional disparities. Also, the funding does not address the consequential costs of construction, repair or renewal.

1010

Many new programs are in and are coming into our secular schools to support student success. The new and renovated facilities necessary to support students need to be appropriately funded. Where increased provincial control is gained by reducing a board's flexibility, the province, as the sole funding source, needs to take the responsibility to ensure that results can be achieved for boards, or boards will be forced to stop expanding and improving on their capital programs.

The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board appreciates the significant steps taken by the government in improving the funding of education for Ontario's students. We believe that the framework for reform is in place. To sustain the success achieved thus far and build on the stability in school boards and schools, the identified shortcomings in funding for declining enrolment, special education, benchmarks, flexibility, transportation and capital need to be addressed. The funding model does require some refinements and enhancements, and these should take place within the core principles of equity, adequacy, flexibility/autonomy and accountability.

Thank you for your time. We'd be pleased to entertain any of your questions.

The Chair: Thank you for the presentation. Questioning goes to the NDP and Mr. Prue.

Mr. Prue: Thank you very much. I take it that most of what you are asking for is possible if the funding formula would only be changed.

Mr. Maloney: That's right.

Mr. Prue: That's the big problem that's been identified in the Legislature.

Mr. Maloney: That's right.

Mr. Prue: Has Ms. Wynne or anyone else in the government given you any indication that they are realistically going to change the funding formula? Because they haven't told us.

Mr. Maloney: We are encouraged by what the government has done in terms of providing funding for the initiatives. There are, as we identified in our brief, issues, particularly locally, where a coterminous board receives more on a grant basis than we do. We hope that the government will see fit to address those inadequacies, because it certainly puts pressure on us in terms of having a balanced budget.

Mr. Prue: You've given some stats—which are quite shocking, but maybe they shouldn't be—that a SEPPA for a junior kindergarten student is \$623 and it's only \$303 for a grade 12 student. How much do you need for a grade 12 student? I think I understand some of the rationale: By the time you get to grade 12, you should have most of the stuff ironed out. But how much do you realistically need?

Mr. Maloney: We believe a student is a student despite the grade level and certainly needs to be funded consistently throughout that student's engagement in the school process.

Mr. Prue: So you're saying a grade 12 student needs the same funding as a junior kindergarten, kindergarten or grade 1 kid.

Mr. Maloney: I would say so.

Mr. Prue: Okay. So you are looking for an additional \$320 for the higher grades that were modified.

Mr. Maloney: That's correct.

Mr. Prue: Okay. You made a statement here about how the lack of flexibility of the model is problematic for Catholic school boards, "who must fund those aspects of their program that are distinctively Catholic," and you go on to give examples of chaplains, adult faith animators, school chapels, student retreats and religious sources. Does the church not play some role here?

Mr. Maloney: The church plays a significant role in the education of our students and the church obviously supports Catholic education. I guess what we're saying with that point is that for those things that are distinctly Catholic, we have an obligation to provide resources and funding. Those add pressure to other things that we're trying to achieve. Really, what we're hoping you recognize is that, because of our uniqueness, there are some additional pressures that we have when it comes to providing that holistic component of Catholic education.

Mr. Prue: I understand the pressures. Are you asking that the finance committee or the minister give additional funding for school chaplains, adult faith animators, school chapels, student retreats etc. or the converse? Are you saying that we have to spend this money, but you need flexibility? I'm not understanding whether you're looking for more money for it.

Mr. Maloney: I think the point is that because of the imbalance in the funding between us and our coterminous board, if we had an equal funding model, then we would be able to do those other things and not add additional pressure to us. If it was an equal footing, then we'd certainly be able to provide the Catholic education that we need to do. But because there are inadequacies in other areas of the funding model, it puts those pressures on other areas.

Mr. Prue: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you for the presentation this morning.

TALK IS FREE THEATRE

The Chair: I would ask Talk is Free Theatre to come forward, please.

Mr. Arkady Spivak: Just me.

The Chair: Good morning, then. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be five minutes of questioning perhaps. I would ask you to introduce yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Mr. Spivak: Thank you. My name is Arkady Spivak. I'm artistic producer of Talk is Free Theatre, which is one of Barrie's local professional theatre companies. I'm also speaking as the central Ontario representative for the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, which is a national service organization for Canadian professional theatres.

I have been asked to speak here today in support of the Ontario Arts Council's request for additional cumulative funding over the next three years in the amount of \$35 million.

High-quality arts organizations that produce, perform and present art are not one-day wonders. Their excellence is founded on long-term artistic vision, but also on professionalism, sound management and excellent planning. Since 2003, the Ontario government has made great strides in its support for the arts community, increasing by \$7.5 million its investment through the Ontario Arts Council, the announcement of the Premier's Award, the establishment of the Minister's Advisory Council for Arts and Culture, the Ontario cultural attractions fund and the broad engagement with the arts community regarding Status of the Artist.

One way or another, millions of Ontarians enjoy, participate in and otherwise benefit from the arts. A large proportion of Ontarians think the arts in the province are important. In fact, 77% believe it's important to have arts organizations in their communities and 87% want children to have arts education experiences of various sorts. It is universally accepted that the arts deliver enormous value to society, and the Ontario Arts Council is one of the province's main instruments for realizing those benefits. Its investments in artists, arts organizations and arts audiences build a more creative, prosperous society. Those investments are repaid many times over.

The greatest challenge faced by the Ontario Arts Council over the next three years will be ensuring stability for Ontario's leading arts organizations and maintaining support to individual artists. At the same time, funds must be found for new and emerging arts organizations. I should point out that my own organization is only three years old and we received our first operating from the council for the current season.

New initiatives must be developed to reflect the growth and increasing diversity of the province. Ontario's vibrant francophone, aboriginal and culturally diverse communities and its regional communities are all priorities for support, as are arts education, arts touring and outreach to all regions.

I would also like to point out that I've recently served on a panel for a theatre projects competition within the arts council and I'm able to confirm first-hand that OAC probably has the toughest job of all the cultural funders that I know in that it has three priorities, such as

geographic distribution of funds all across Ontario—not just Toronto, where most of the artistic activity happens—but it also has to serve a culturally diverse community as well as new expressions of creativity, new theatrical forms.

To fully play its part in continuing to encourage a new generation of economic growth, the Ontario Arts Council requests a cumulative, three-year budget increase totalling \$35 million.

At \$40 million, OAC's current operating budget remains slightly lower than its high point in 1995. The most effective and efficient way to increase the socio-economic status of artists is by increasing funding to arts organizations and to individual artists. In 2002-03, 55% of all spending by the 423 arts organizations funded by OAC went directly to people: almost \$189 million to freelance artists, artistic staff production and technical personnel, as well as administrative staff. More than half went directly to artists.

1020

Increasing funding to arts organizations also directly increases creation and innovation across the province. During 2002-03, 423 arts organizations created almost 1,600 new works—works in new media, films, plays, dance, opera, choral works, symphonic pieces, books, paintings and installations.

What are the outcomes that may come from the increased funding?

- encouraging long-term planning and development within arts organizations;

- increasing the number of the best Ontario artists receiving grants, both established and emerging;

- developing new audiences and markets in Ontario by bringing the arts to more Ontarians everywhere;

- increasing corporate support, because corporations as well as the public like to see government endorsement of arts organizations;

- increasing audiences and earned revenues for arts organizations;

- giving more exposure to Ontario artists' work, greater employment opportunities and greater income and economic status for individual artists.

Why the Ontario Arts Council? The arts community represents a significant sector of society and of provincial gross domestic product. OAC is Ontario's main instrument for providing direct investment that is responsive to all the needs of the arts. The OAC is admired for the quality of its leadership and diversity of its programs. It carries out a complex but critically important job. Last year it allocated \$35.5 million to a total of 784 arts organizations and 1,327 individual artists in 251 Ontario communities.

For more than 40 years, OAC has fulfilled its legislative mandate with continuity and stability. OAC has won the trust of the arts community through its consistency and responsiveness and its transparent and rigorous processes.

Our current strategic plan, Stability and Strength, has four guiding objectives: to provide focused investment in

the arts; to ensure widely accessible community participation; to give strategic leadership in arts policy and programming; and to exercise effective financial stewardship.

OAC recognizes the need for coherence and continuity of support to arts organizations. It has developed a multi-year approach to operational funding, accompanied by sophisticated assessment criteria that examine both artistic impact and organizational effectiveness.

I should also point out that every time somebody fills out an application to the Ontario Arts Council, even though they may not get funding, the actual process is so strong, it actually strengthens the arts organization. It almost replaces writing a business plan in some cases. So that process is very valuable in and of itself, let alone the funding.

Also, I personally find it to be a very no-frills, highly effective organization in itself. It's one of the very few funders that actually returns calls within four to five hours. Some other funding bodies are actually impossible to get to talk to to ascertain the programs and their potential support.

There is also the question of a new program that is coming through right now called ArtsBuild Ontario. This is a capital program to support arts infrastructure. ArtsBuild Ontario currently represents 396 performing and visual arts organizations. It is concerned about the dire state of arts facilities across the province in which small and mid-sized arts organizations must work. There has been really no provincial government funding for cultural infrastructure for about 15 years, except for the SuperBuild program in 2001. With our current production at Talk is Free Theatre, we've made both the Toronto Star and Variety, and it's interesting to read that national talent work in a renovated Beer Store, which is what we were given to perform out of.

That concludes my presentation. Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you for the presentation. The question goes to the government.

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): Thank you very much. You spoke very knowledgeably about the Ontario Arts Council. Would you mind if I asked you a few questions about your actual organization, Talk is Free Theatre? Tell me just a few of the parameters around Talk is Free; for example, how many separate productions you might do in a year. Tell me a little bit about your theatre and its capacity, subscriber base and box office sales.

Mr. Spivak: In our current season, we're doing six plays; last year, we did seven. We usually have other activities throughout the year such as workshops, play readings; in other words, new work development which is not revenue-driven, which is really the basis of the funding from the Ontario Arts Council. We have four ongoing youth programs. One of the main ones is called Small Talk, and that's a youth mentorship program that is offered free of charge. We have a "bring your parents to the theatre" program. We have an "artists in the classroom" program that actually sends professional artists

into classroom settings to help the teacher develop curriculum with a performance element.

The theatre was formed in late 2002 in Barrie with a mandate of supporting an emerging artist community by producing work that is rarely produced or that has enjoyed sort of a fractured production history in the past, as well as to address the well-being of youth locally through a variety of youth outreach and educational programs. We do a lot of things. It is our priority, although not our mandate, to hire local professional artists, as many as we can find, to produce things like Canadian musicals, Canadian content, shows that don't really get done, certainly not elsewhere in a community of our size.

Mr. Delaney: Would I recognize any of the productions in 2006 or 2007, just out of curiosity?

Mr. Spivak: We are currently doing Harvest Moon Rising, which is a musical by Leslie Arden, who lives in Cookstown. It is a musical that was written, in fact, 20 years ago, and it talks about the plight of Canadian farming. It's actually more relevant now than it has ever been. It's written by, as I said, Leslie Arden, who has recently been featured in a workshop presentation in New York. Her new show, called One Step Forward, which is based on Much Ado About Nothing, is currently in negotiation with commercial producers in New York and Chicago. This is a seller out front for us, so I'm all hyped up. I have to run to my theatre at 11:30 for students after I'm done.

Mr. Delaney: What would your subscriber base be?

Mr. Spivak: Currently it's 750. This year we are doing a lot of work with trying to get as many tourists as possible into the community—cultural tours and buses, or motor coaches, as I like to call them—through packages. You have to do shows that will necessarily—you know, we're doing Bye Bye Birdie later on, just to make sure that old people will come.

Mr. Delaney: Could you tell me a little bit about, for example, some of the support you may or indeed may not have from the local municipalities around here and what corporate sponsorship success you may have had?

Mr. Spivak: The decision that we made early on was that government funding is great, but there is a right time for it. You don't really start the organization with the funding in place, so you have to get your ducks in a row. You have to start without any money and without any building, both of which we've done. As you heard from my presentation, I'm a huge advocate of funding, but it has to come to the right place. It has to come to an organization that has evolved and stabilized itself, at least at its core.

We have currently about 67 cash sponsors and about 35 in-kind sponsors. Our corporate goal is \$85,000 from sponsorships alone. We do about three or four fundraisers a year. We do bingo, of course, and other activities that actually raise money. Under the new, highly effective Building a Creative Future municipal plan, we've received a \$30,000 operating grant this year. That and the Ontario Arts Council grant has more or less stabilized

funding; we've received our \$15,000 grant from OAC this year.

Mr. Delaney: Thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

UNITED WAY OF GREATER SIMCOE COUNTY

The Chair: Would the United Way of Greater Simcoe County come forward, please? Good morning. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Ms. Seija Suutari: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Seija Suutari. I'm the executive director for the United Way of Greater Simcoe County. On my right, I've brought along Gail Michalenko. She's a program manager for the Georgian Triangle Housing Resource Centre. On my left is Lilian Boote. She's a program manager for community 211 at Community Connection in Collingwood.

Thank you so much, ladies and gentlemen, for permitting the opportunity for us to speak to you today. The United Way of Greater Simcoe County would like to bring three issues to your attention that are of concern to our communities. These are related to community 211, homelessness prevention, and an Ontario Works rate increase.

1030

Our first recommendation, related to community 211, is that the 2007-08 Ontario budget invest in the expansion of province-wide 211 services in collaboration with United Ways, community information centres, municipalities and others. Like 911, 211 on the telephone—you dial it—is an easy-to-recall, three-digit dialling code intended to improve public access to social, health and related non-emergency human services offered by various government and community-based agencies across Canada.

Community 211 is now available to about 30% of Ontario residents. People in Toronto, Niagara region and a small portion of Simcoe county have access to 211 right now. In 2006, some provincial money was provided to start up new call centres in Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Windsor and Halton region.

Simcoe county's 211 service was launched in November 2005 and currently covers the communities of Collingwood and Blue Mountain. United Ways of Greater Simcoe County and South Georgian Bay have invested \$165,000 since 2003 to make this a reality. Provincial participation is the missing element required to mobilize the 211 provincial implementation plan and provide all Simcoe county residents with access to this valuable service. We, alongside the call centre, cannot sustain this alone.

Apart from greatly improving service delivery to the public and being an authoritative information resource for a variety of service professionals, 211 also provides the province with opportunities to improve service de-

livery, achieve efficiencies and avoid duplication inherent in the proliferation of various 1-800 numbers and service providers. There are also abundant opportunities to deploy this resource in the whole area of emergency services, which has not been exploited to date.

The United Way of Greater Simcoe County invites the province of Ontario to join with other funders and ensure all residents of Simcoe county have access to 211, and help accelerate the overall pace of 211 development throughout Ontario. Provincial investment will also help leverage additional funding and in-kind contributions from other levels of government and private sources and will permit the United Way of Greater Simcoe County to invest in other areas that require urgent attention.

Our donors are continually telling us that they believe 211 is clearly a government responsibility and are beginning to resent shouldering the burden of this program exclusively within our communities.

The next issue we would like to speak about is homelessness prevention. We're recommending that the provincial budget commit additional new funding to increase investment in the consolidated housing prevention program, abbreviated CHPP.

For 2007, the province will allocate about \$275,000 for Simcoe county to support countywide homelessness prevention services. It's difficult indeed to imagine circumstances under which support for low-income households would be reduced. Nevertheless, the federally funded supporting communities partnership initiative has been slated to end in March 2007, and although a successor program has been identified, its details have not been publicly disclosed. There is no guarantee that the fiscal 2006-07 federal homelessness initiative funds of approximately \$293,000 allocated to Simcoe county will be renewed under the new federal initiative. Even when current provincial amounts are combined with the existing federal funds, it is simply not enough to support homelessness prevention in Simcoe county.

The constant uncertainty in federal government funding plus evidence of growing need among the most vulnerable in our communities suggest that the province needs to show leadership in protecting those with the fewest choices. Our shelter programs, drop-in centres, food banks and the need for crisis interventions are reporting increases across the board. Homelessness initiatives that are supported and run by community-based organizations are chronically underfunded and under-resourced. The shelter per diems do not even cover the actual cost per bed per person. Ongoing stable and predictable assistance is needed to help support core services and will help avoid some of the download costs such as increased demands on health and justice systems, job loss and disruption of education.

We strongly recommend the provision of permanent funding for community-based housing support workers through programs such as CHPP, which will build on existing strategies for preventing homelessness. Given the uncertainty over federal government funding, these are critical times indeed for our communities.

Lastly, we would like to advocate on behalf of an Ontario Works rate increase, and to increase benefits for Ontario Works clients. After being reduced by 21.6% in 1995 as a result of Premier Harris and his Common Sense Revolution, and remaining frozen for the subsequent eight years, social assistance rates have in recent years been increased twice by modest amounts. Regrettably, these increases did little to restore the eroded purchasing power of recipients as they struggled to cope with the increased cost of the basic necessities such as shelter, food, utilities and clothing.

Rents, for example, the single biggest household expense, have consistently outpaced inflation. The Ontario rates rose by 25.9% between 1997 and 2003. The 2004 and 2006 rates have softened, but the cumulative impact is still being felt. In some communities, average rents have now exceeded social assistance benefits. Most social assistance recipients must devote disproportionately large amounts of their income to rent, which makes it impossible to afford adequate food and other basics. This renders recipients vulnerable to eviction and homelessness and increases their reliance on food banks and other charitable supports.

In fact, the adequacy of Ontario Works rates was one of the key issues examined during the inquest into the unfortunate death in 2001 of Kimberly Rogers, a young lady confined to house arrest for welfare fraud who died at eight months pregnant in her sweltering apartment in Sudbury, Ontario. The coroner's jury recommended that there needed to be a review of all social assistance rates, and allowances for housing and basic need should be based on actual costs within a particular community and region.

An increase in social assistance rates, at a minimum to restore them to pre-1995 levels and adjusted for inflation, would help the most vulnerable people and families to afford basic food, shelter and other necessities and help alleviate the growing strain faced by food banks and other community service providers.

We would like the provincial government to help people like Kimberly, who was trying to break free of the cycles associated with poverty and despair, to break free of that cycle.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you. We are available for any questions you may have.

The Chair: Thank you for the presentation. This round of questioning goes to the official opposition, Mr. Tascona.

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): Thank you for coming here today. I appreciate your submission. I just have a few questions, if I could, on your presentation. Number one, the partnering to deliver 211 service province-wide: I've been involved in that in the county and it has been really a success. I'm just wondering, what would be the cost? Do you know what the cost would be to do what you're proposing?

Ms. Suutari: I'm going to defer this question to Lilian Boote. That's why I brought her along with me.

Ms. Lilian Boote: I don't think I can answer this. What is the cost of partnering with the region: Is that what you're asking?

Mr. Tascona: What kind of funding would be needed to do this partnering?

Ms. Boote: The total amount to support the call centre is about \$250,000 per year, and it's suggested that it should be a partnership of funders between United Way, municipalities and the province.

Mr. Tascona: You can make further submissions on that. I just wanted to know what the fee would be to do that initiative so that we could have some hard numbers to work with.

With respect to homelessness prevention, in terms of cross-section, do you keep stats on this particular issue for Simcoe county? You do represent Simcoe county.

Ms. Suutari: We do indeed, although capturing the actual homeless population is somewhat of a challenge due the transitional nature of those people who are in those circumstances. The national prevalence rate is 1.3% of the total population. We are consistent with those numbers. We also know that we have increased use. Our shelters are at full capacity. There is increased demand on food banks, crisis interventions and the help that's required from the various housing support workers. So we do know that. But in terms of specific numbers, I don't know if you can answer that question, Gail.

Mr. Tascona: I represent Barrie and Bradford, and Barrie is the main city in the county and then we have other areas.

Ms. Gail Michalenko: The primary purpose of the housing support centres is to prevent homelessness or to take people from a homelessness situation into permanent housing. Each of the centres is seeing at least 1,500 people a year. On average, 30% of those people are completely homeless and over 50% are homeless or at extreme risk of homelessness within 30 days of losing their housing.

Mr. Tascona: I work closely with the groups within Barrie, and there are programs in Innisfil and also Bradford. The work that they do is incredible. I'm just trying to figure out what the percentages would be in Simcoe North as opposed to the Barrie area in the south.

Ms. Michalenko: Very similar.

1040

Mr. Tascona: In terms of the Ontario Works rates increase, you were talking about the rent data that you have. Do you have any rent data for, say, the city of Barrie in terms of how much their rents have increased? You have a period from 1997 to 2003. Do you have any information on—

Ms. Suutari: I actually just looked that up yesterday on the CMHC website, and the average rent increase between 2002 and 2006 in this community was about 5.4%. As we indicated in the briefing, rent rate increases have softened in 2005 and 2006, but the cumulative impact since 1997 has been significant. But I don't know those amounts for this specific community.

Mr. Tascona: Do you have any information on what the average rent would be per month for a one-bedroom versus a two-bedroom in the Barrie area?

Ms. Suutari: I don't have that information.

Ms. Michalenko: It's about \$750 for a one-bedroom, and about \$850 to \$900 for a two-bedroom.

Mr. Tascona: Okay. Thank you.

With respect to food bank use, we have the Barrie Food Bank. We actually have a new program, the bulk food, which I attended the other day and which I think is a good program. That's at the downtown centre, by the Barrie Community Health Centre. The food bank use in Barrie: Do you have any information on what that would be?

Ms. Suutari: Again, I don't have specific numbers, but I know that their demands are increasing. All service providers are reporting demands in terms of increasing services.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

JOE TASCONA

The Chair: I call on Joe Tascona, MPP. I think you know how this proceeds, but you have 10 minutes for your presentation, and there may be five minutes of questioning. If you'd identify yourself for the purposes of Hansard.

Mr. Tascona: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Joe Tascona. I'm the member of provincial Parliament for the riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, which makes up Barrie, the town of Innisfil and the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury.

I have a presentation here, and I hope everyone has a copy of the paper. I want to thank the committee for coming here to Barrie with respect to the 2007 hearings. I think it's great that you're here so you can get some input from this particular area and others.

There are four areas of immediate concern that I wish to bring to the committee for its consideration. It's broken into, first, the Lake Simcoe One Voice Action Plan, which is set out at tab 1. The second area I want to discuss is the Simcoe county judicial resources, which is set out, the backup data, at tab 2. Third is the Royal Victoria Hospital health services upgrade, which is set out at tab 3. Number 4 would be Highway 400 and GO Transit, which are set out at tab 4.

I think what's interesting in terms of the growth of this area—I'll just digress for a moment. The racetrack facility, which we call the Barrie Events Centre, which is just down the road from here—it's owned by the agricultural society—was sold last week for \$33 million, the entire property, which is about 42 to 48 acres, and it's slated to be used for retail. When you drive into the city of Barrie, you see the old Molson plant and the parkland around that, which is now owned by Park Place, and that's slated for multiple-use-type development. So you can see that the pressures on the area and the interest in the area are growing. The province has designated it as an economic growth centre, so there are some challenges

in terms of the population growth and also the economic growth that we're seeing. It's not as much of an engine as Mr. Delaney's area, but we're getting towards that.

In the first area, the Lake Simcoe One Voice Action Plan, as you know, Barrie has Kempenfelt Bay as the water body in this area. It also feeds into Lake Simcoe and it's covered at the south end down to Keswick, and at the north end up into the Orillia area.

I enclosed in part of tab 1 the Lake Simcoe One Voice Action Plan. The Lake Simcoe watershed is a critical resource that requires a sustainable, long-term, integrated planning and implementation framework. The action plans are found at pages 28 to 31, which I would ask you to review at your leisure. The total cost is estimated at about \$163 million for ensuring that the lake is sustainable in terms of its water quality and also its future ability to be sustained.

It's imperative that this committee understand that Simcoe county is not part of the greenbelt and that population growth through development pressures could harm Lake Simcoe. That is set out very clearly in terms of the current state of the watershed on pages 15 to 22 of the strategic plan. I would urge you to review that. I think it's important obviously from an environmental perspective that we be cognizant of Lake Simcoe. Lake Simcoe is really the jewel of this particular area. In the late 18th century this was an area where people would come for their water supply and export that down to the United States because of the quality of the water. The challenges with respect to zebra mussels making the water too clear, the fungi growth that's happening and the phosphorus problems in the lake, the emissions that come out of Bradford West Gwillimbury in particular, have caused a big area to have problems in terms of fish being able to repopulate and the lake sustaining itself in terms of the quality of the water. For example, the town of Innisfil's water supply, their drinking water, essentially is from Lake Simcoe, so it's a very important area.

The second area is Simcoe county judicial resources. I hosted, as MPP, and I know other members, like the Minister of Agriculture, Ms. Dombrowsky, and Bob Runciman, hosted an Ontario Bar Association town hall meeting. We got input from the local citizenry, and the consensus from the town hall meeting is that there's a shortage of judicial resources, limiting fair and timely access to the justice system in the Barrie court service area. In a nutshell, in tab 2, there's documentation from the city of Barrie that has been sent to the Ministry of the Attorney General indicating that there is a shortage of justices of the peace in this area, which is impacting bail hearings and also access to the criminal justice system and which has not been dealt with by the Attorney General in terms of the justice of the peace issue, something I want you to note. Also, we received a submission from the Simcoe County Family Law Lawyers' Association entitled Justice Delayed is Justice Denied.

In tab 2, I'd refer you to page 3, just to give you an example of the judge-to-population ratio. In Toronto, it's 33,101. In central east, which is the district that we're in, Barrie, it's 60,205. The larger the population-to-judge

ratio means more applications per judge, we continue to grow.

The number of new family court applications in Barrie has grown from 2,089 in 2001 to 3,724 in 2006. What we're finding here is that whereas a judge in Barrie faces lists of up to 15 case conferences per day, in Toronto they face case conferences of five to six because they have more judges down there.

In Hamilton, for example, you have the original family court system. I know the members are familiar with that. I went to school at McMaster when they were setting it up in Hamilton. We have 1.75 family court specialist judges, whereas Hamilton has five family court judges and one supernumerary judge, yet the number of new applications is almost the same. Simply put, Hamilton has 550% more family court specialist judges than we do in Barrie, but merely 5% more applications per year, so it gives you a bit of a context.

What that means is that we're not following and adhering to in the justice system the mandated one-judge case-managed system. That's not happening, which means families involved in separation and divorces are being put back on the lists. So they're not adhering to that particular process, which is causing a lot of strain on the judicial system.

Now, with respect to Royal Victoria Hospital, I've set out documentation with respect to the cancer care centre, which we're pleased to see is going to begin in 2008-09. The RVH news release of January 18, 2007 is enclosed there, and it basically states that when the Simcoe-Muskoka Regional Cancer Centre opens in 2010, it will log over 62,000 patient visits that first year of operation. I've corresponded with the ministers responsible on this—Mr. Caplan and Mr. Smitherman—with respect to trying to advance the date of construction. In York region, the Southlake facility is going to start in 2007, but surely the need in this area is just as urgent because of the need that we have going from the Simcoe county area all the way up to Muskoka. So we wanted that to be put into consideration. I certainly questioned the ministers on their ability to do this. Cancer Care Ontario recently designated RVH as a service provider in this area, so things are moving along, but we'd like to see some further progress on that particular issue. The hospital services a good portion of Simcoe county, so obviously it's a regional hospital that needs to be upgraded in its expansion mode.

1050

The final matter—and I think I've got about two minutes left—is Highway 400 and GO Transit. GO Transit is slated to return to Barrie. It was cut off in 1992 by the government of that day. It's slated to return in the late fall of next year, which we're very pleased to see will happen. But what we also have is the growth on the highways and the gridlock problem. I'm not unlike Durham in terms of the growth in this area. Highway 400 from Highway 89 is projected to be expanded. That hasn't happened. I had asked for an environmental review of that, and the minister—it's enclosed in tab 4—deemed that that wasn't necessary in 2006, but they

haven't proceeded at all with respect to doing the increase in lanes in this area. All they ever did was look at repaving, which is not acceptable. We do need up to eight lanes going into Barrie from Highway 89 and then, past Barrie, some eight lanes would be necessary for Highway 11.

In a nutshell, that's a serious issue because of the population growth in this area. We're not a part of the greenbelt, and there's going to be greater growth in this area, and we need to address those transportation issues.

I think my time has expired. I certainly am open to some questions. I thank you, once again, for coming to Barrie and hearing from the local citizens.

The Chair: The questioning goes to the NDP. Mr. Prue.

Mr. Prue: It's not often that we get an opportunity to ask questions of our colleagues, although he is my seatmate, just across a little, tiny aisle. We get to talk quite often, but not in this particular way.

In terms of Lake Simcoe, your first one was the action plans found between pages 28 and 31, a total cost of \$163.4 million. When I turn to those pages, there's an action plan, but there's no cost. Where is this amount derived from?

Mr. Tascona: It's found on the third page, where it says, "Lake Simcoe needs urgent help." It has the cost on the right side of the page, the total being \$163.4 million.

Mr. Prue: I've found it now. Over what period of time is that intended to be spent?

Mr. Tascona: They're basing it on this 2006 action plan.

Mr. Prue: On that page, I've just seen that it would take 70 years to restore the lake. Is that a 70-year plan, or is this what needs to be spent the first year?

Mr. Tascona: No, it's not a 70-year plan. It's an action plan. From what I understand, they would like it acted upon by 2010, as you see here on page 31. As the plans progress, they have a number of different themes, but it's certainly a plan that they would like to see operative and completed by 2010.

Mr. Tascona: As the representative for this area, how much money do you think should be in the budget for this particular year? That's what we're doing here: We're looking to see what should be in the budget. This is a long-term project that literally almost everyone in Ontario would agree with: keeping the health of one of Ontario's largest lakes.

Mr. Tascona: The current investment is \$1.125 million a year, which is not enough. The plan is slated over a four-year period. We're in 2007 now. You'd be looking for at least 25% of that amount per year if you were to activate that plan.

Mr. Prue: So we're looking at about \$40 million.

Mr. Tascona: Correct.

Mr. Prue: Okay. The second was Highway 400. We had an earlier deputation from the Liberal Party of Barrie, and on this one item you both agree. Can you tell me how much money would have to be spent to upgrade the entrances off the 400 into Barrie? How much is necessary to have it done right?

Mr. Tascona: My discussions with the Ministry of Transportation, which haven't been reproduced in writing—I think the figure, this plan, to do the highway expansion, the upgrades and the five interchanges would be about \$550 million, because it's not just a replacement; it's actually an expansion to deal with these particular issues. That was the figure we were looking at.

Mr. Prue: That's considerable. That needs to be done over what period of time?

Mr. Tascona: We do not know, because these plans had been seriously put in place around 2003 but there's been no action on that to do this. You have to be looking to do the upgrades, and I think it would be a one-year project at least to do the upgrades in terms of lane increase. In terms of the interchanges, it would be a two- to three-year period to realistically get that done.

Mr. Prue: My last question relates to GO Transit. This was stopped in 1992 and it has not returned. It would seem to me that this is a project whose time has again come—if we're serious about the environment and gridlock and all the other things—to get this back on board. Is the infrastructure still available? The tracks, obviously, are probably still there. Everything's there. You just need a train.

Mr. Tascona: Yes, everything is there, even the location for the trains to come. Everything is in place. The work has been done. The environmental assessment was completed. We're just waiting for the train to re-enter the area in the fall of 2007. That's the information I received from the minister. I put it in there also because I had couriered her with order paper questions as to when this was going to happen, and she provided me with that information, that that's when it would happen. The infrastructure is essentially in place.

The Chair: Thank you for the presentation.

CRIMINAL LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION

The Chair: Now I call on the Criminal Lawyers' Association to come forward, please. Good morning. You have 10 minutes for your presentation, and there could be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Mr. Tom Bryson: My name is Tom Bryson. I'm a director of the Criminal Lawyers' Association and, as well, the president of the Criminal Lawyers' Association in the county of Simcoe. I've been a sole practitioner here in Barrie for nearly 30 years, with a substantial portion of my practice in the area of criminal law. I also hold appointments as a federal crown and have prosecuted cases for the provincial crown as a part-time or assistant crown attorney.

The association has submitted a brief in support of an increase in funding of legal aid, and that's really my purpose in being here. The Criminal Lawyers' Association is well-known. It's the largest association of defence lawyers in Canada. It's centred in Ontario, and that's why we call ourselves the Criminal Lawyers' Association of Ontario. We've taken a wide series of

roles in educating, promoting and representing our membership and issues relating to developments in criminal law, constitutional law and the administration of justice as well, provincially and locally.

Our concern is to support Legal Aid Ontario's business plan and request for further funding. Our concern is to assist you in your duties by emphasizing the importance of the justice system and ensuring a fair and accessible justice system. Part of that requires legal aid, in my respectful submission.

1100

Legal Aid Ontario is an organization and an assistance program that's very highly regarded in the province. We know, from opinion polls, that about 85% of Ontario residents support providing legal aid services for low-income individuals and 71% believe that it's important to ensure, through legal aid, fairness and equity in the justice system.

Of course, even though I'm speaking on behalf of the Criminal Lawyers' Association, I have to keep in mind that we're also talking about legal services for people in family law and, in particular, women whose husbands have left them and who are left with the burden of rearing their children. They very much need help in court.

Despite the importance of legal aid, there has been a 42%-increase in the number of certificate applications refused. In other words, Legal Aid Ontario has been under such budgetary pressure that they've had to cut back very severely the services they can offer. I suppose the best way I can illustrate that is, the financial eligibility test to get a legal aid certificate is such that a person on welfare isn't assured they'll get it. They just fall into the grey area. So in the province of Ontario it's easier to get welfare than it is, in terms of financial eligibility, to obtain a legal aid certificate.

The importance of legal aid in the last few years has increased due to an increase in prosecutions in Ontario due to these guns and gangs cases and large prosecutions that occupy an enormous amount of court time. What I wish to emphasize isn't that everyone should get a legal aid certificate—it's not that at all. I'm not suggesting that the compensation rate for lawyers should even approach something like the private bar would get. But to some degree, in order to ensure the orderly administration of justice, it's important that certain people are assured that they lawyers to assist them. In that sense, then, a little bit of money thrown into the system—if I can put it that way—will in fact save money. It will cause the total administration of justice to be less expensive, to work more orderly and therefore serve the interests of the people of Ontario.

That would be my submission. I'm open to questions. I know you're running a bit ahead but I'm happy to answer any questions that you have. I know you have the written submission and you understand that basically we're here to support legal aid.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Carol Mitchell): Thank you very much for your presentation. This round of questioning goes to the government.

Mr. Arthurs: Thank you for the presentation. We have had presentations with regard to legal aid during our tour. This is helpful to reinforce that, at least. I'm not going to take the full five minutes, I don't think, but maybe if you would, for us and for the purpose as we look at the financial issues of the province and the needs, tell us what are the types of services for those who are seeking legal aid. You mentioned women and children of fathers who have left and the like. What are the types of services that end up best serving those who are marginalized?

Mr. Bryson: First of all, I'm going to describe a set of different services, because one of the most interesting things in the last few years is the way legal aid has sort of restructured itself and changed to provide services. Initially, legal aid was set up on what's called a certificate system, a contracting out. A lawyer accepting a certificate was authorized to do certain services: defend a criminal case; bring an application for custody, support or a division of assets; assist a person in immigration matters. At one time, legal aid issued certificates in civil matters. They've stopped that. Legal aid has had to abandon that.

But legal aid has added to that. They now operate duty counsel in all courts. Duty counsel is there to assist people who come to court without representation. The difficulty with duty counsel is, of course, that it's like I arrive at court with my particular set of problems and I speak to duty counsel. He or she may have 10, 12, 20, even 40 people and, in certain courts, believe it or not, more than 100, and therefore their ability to really understand the case is very slight. It's a service really of just allowing the court to operate as efficiently as it can. Legal aid, though, now has started to hire people who are full-time duty counsel and therefore allow for continuity of service. That means that a file can actually be maintained by that person. Finally, they're experimenting in staff offices.

There's quite a range of services for family law matters, in particular for women, aboriginals, immigrants, accused persons. There are services for this type of situation: A man is charged with sexual assault, and the victim or complainant of that sexual assault has maintained perhaps a diary, like many of us do, or has been to a counsellor. The accused wants, through his counsel, to have access to those records. Legal aid will provide a lawyer for that woman to defend her right to privacy of those records, whether they be counselling records or third party records.

In other words, it's quite an enormous range of services geared towards the poor in our society. Unluckily, because of the cutbacks, it's almost become a service for the extremely poor, and that's a problem.

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much.

TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

The Acting Chair: I would ask the Toronto Catholic District School Board to come forward, please.

Mr. Oliver Carroll: Good morning.

The Acting Chair: Good morning. If you would please state your name for the record. The round of questioning will go to the official opposition. You will have 10 minutes for your presentation and they will have five minutes for questions. If you'd like to begin your presentation.

Mr. Carroll: My name is Oliver Carroll. I'm a trustee with and the chair of the Toronto Catholic District School Board. I appreciate you don't hear very much about Toronto, so I thought I'd come up here and keep you in touch with it.

Thank you for the opportunity of speaking to you today. I'm sure that you have and will hear many speakers talk about the operating problems faced by school boards here in Ontario. I heard my colleagues at the Simcoe Catholic school board talking a little earlier.

You may be thinking, "Here we go, another school board and its problems." Of course, that's a given. We've made many submissions to the Ministry of Education about how the funding formula could be changed to address the operating budget issues, and I'm sure that these have been provided to you. I of course agree with my colleagues from both of the associations and from other school boards, but today I wanted to focus on a different challenge: capital and infrastructure planning.

I'm going to talk to you about how we can work together to meet the provincial goal of building strong communities at a minimal cost to the province. My objective today is to try and convince you and the government that the province should endorse in the coming budget the concept of ensuring that the best publicly owned school property remains in public hands and is available for use by school boards at some time in the future to educate our children. That sounds relatively simple, and we think so, but I'm sure that some others may not see it in quite the same light.

I should give you some background on the school boards in Toronto. The Toronto Catholic District School Board operates about 200 schools; the Toronto District School Board, 550. We have about 20 vacant schools at this point in time, and over the next while we'll probably add an additional 10 to that, for 30 vacant schools.

The Toronto District School Board is in the process of looking at its school properties. You may have read recently in the *Star*, at least from one trustee, that they're looking at consolidating certain schools. When they're finished that process, they may have upwards of 100 pieces of property vacant in the city of Toronto. Most of the property that's available in Toronto—when I say "the city," I mean the new city as opposed to the old city of Toronto—tends to be in mature areas, except in the suburbs like Scarborough, which I happen to represent. In many cases, those pieces of property are the only available public piece of property in that community. So when a school board takes a look at closing a school, it has an impact on the community beyond just the piece of property.

Both boards are working together on this issue. We've started discussions with the Toronto French-language

school boards basically to determine how the accommodation of each of us can be met prior to the disposition of surplus properties.

1110

We've also had some discussions with the city of Toronto to determine the best approach to realizing the maximum financial value for our property while providing for future needs. I would add that we do want to have our cake and eat it. We want to have it today and we want to eat it some time in two or three generations. So we're looking at a process by which we can realize the value of that property today, and maintain those properties in public hands until such time as they're needed for education purposes, at which time they would be returned to the particular school board to build schools or to expand facilities. We think that we have an obligation, not only to trustees, as trustees, but also to the taxpayers to take a look at the best way to realize these values.

One thing we have learned from past experience—and, I'm sure, any of you from communities where people have looked at closing schools—is that taxpayers generally view school property as belonging to the public and as a community asset. We can make arguments about the fact that the title is vested in the school board, but at the end of the day most of our supporters see that as a public asset, much like a park.

Both boards are at the point now where we really must make decisions on our long-term accommodation plan. As I've said, we'll be looking at upwards of 30 pieces of property ourselves, and the Toronto district board many more than that. So there is no way that we can delay any further.

Over the last 18 months, we've been working with the Toronto district board to come up with a plan to use existing capital assets, basically our school properties, to generate significant revenues while keeping their use, as I've said, and ownership in public hands for future growth. At the end of the day, what we want to do is sell the rights to those surplus properties where the community has an interest in it. We believe it can work, not only in Toronto, but anywhere else in the province where you have growth areas and land values that are reflected in being almost beyond the reach of public institutions.

In this situation, we think that it's not only a win-win for ourselves and the city and the province, but also for the public. It helps the province by supplementing sources of capital funding for schools, thus saving the province money. It gives municipalities an opportunity to provide green space and services to the community at little cost to the city. And it gives the school board the opportunity to optimize the value of their property and ensures the property will be available in the future to educate our children.

You hear a lot about the declining enrolment. In fact, enrolment has declined by about half a per cent across the whole province; in some areas, obviously more than others. There is no doubt, notwithstanding the current movie *Children of Men*, that we will go on having children and I suspect that our enrolments will begin to

increase again some time in the middle of the next decade. The fact of the matter is that our population grows, our immigration grows, and demographics and of course the values of the society change. But the bottom line is that people have children, and I think we're probably nearing the bottom of that trough, depending on the demography you speak to. We want to provide the school property for the future.

Let me talk about the city of Toronto, though, because that's what we're dealing with, but it could be any city. We have basically suggested that where one of the school boards or the city has an interest in a piece of property, we be allowed to enter into an agreement that would permit us to zone the property to its highest allowable value and sell the density rights to that property. We're talking about only where the city has an interest in the piece of property, where the city wants to maintain it for park purposes or whatever.

Mr. Prue, who of course represented East York as mayor, will appreciate that most of the school property in that area, and it would apply, I suspect, to almost all of you—in the mature areas, if you move to close a school, first of all, there is disruption in the community and, second, if you move to sell it to the highest bidder, so to speak, subject to zoning, you have a community that very much is up in arms about what's going on.

We're suggesting that where that school is going to be sold or closed, we would like to zone it and move those density rights off it within the normal planning process, sell them and in turn lease that piece of property back to the city to use for parkland or some other purposes for a dollar a year until it's needed, if ever, by the school board for educational purposes, and educational purposes only. So at the end of the day, we're looking to realize the maximum value and have basically a developer pay for it, lease it back to the city so that the community has a park in the middle of its community as opposed to another, shall we say, large development that it doesn't want, and that it's maintained like that. That could be 25 or 50 years. Land is not going to get any cheaper in the centre of our cities, and school boards in the future will be faced, as will public institutions, with trying to acquire land where they've let it go. We're suggesting that this is a method by which that land can be kept in public hands for use, as I said, by the school boards whenever.

Just to go through it, these rights would be sold through the normal planning process. We're not suggesting that somehow the province step in and say that school boards may upgrade their properties and sell them to the private sector or to whomever will buy it. That would be totally disruptive to the normal planning process in a city. We're saying that we still have to go through the planning process, and that it would at the end of the day only be sold to those areas that the city recognizes would need some type of intensification.

Most of the areas that we look at in the city—I can speak about the ones in Scarborough, for anybody who knows that. Most of our properties are contiguous to parks, almost totally. When Scarborough was laid out,

that's how they laid out the public lands. So you can imagine what happens when we decide that we'd like to sell that property and there's nothing better than a 20-storey condo or a subdivision going to go in, sitting on the site of that park. We think that everybody is better off where that plan remains for use by the public. Everybody wins in this case.

Where does the province fit in? What we need from the province, quite frankly, is an overarching policy framework that municipalities can rely on to make their own commitment to support this approach. Interestingly enough, the province already has such a policy framework. We just want to you to be a little more vocal about it.

Am I about done?

The Acting Chair: I'm going to let you close.

Mr. Carroll: Okay. The bottom line is that the provincial policy statement issued two years ago about building strong communities does recognize that we all need to work together for the interest of the public.

The Acting Chair: Thank you very much. This round of questioning goes to the official opposition.

Mr. Arnott: Thank you very much for your presentation. I sense you had some more information that you wanted to convey. Given the fact that you now have time, I'd turn it back to you if you have another point you'd like to make in general, and then if you still have time at the end, I'll maybe ask you a question.

Mr. Carroll: We just want to go back to the provincial statement. Basically, the province is promoting "healthy, livable and safe communities." It talks about us needing to project our needs out at least 20 years. It goes on to say in the policy statement related to all of this, "A coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach should be used when dealing with planning matters within municipalities." We're suggesting that we do that. The problem is, quite frankly—and the city of Toronto is interested in it; it's just that everything gets bogged down in the "one only." We're looking for an overarching support to do this. We're looking for a statement in the budget that the province believes this is the way to go, and that will send a strong signal to the city of Toronto that we need to get on with this.

Mr. Arnott: You say the city of Toronto is interested, but do you sense that they're somewhat reluctant? Are there any reasons why they would be?

Mr. Carroll: Sheila Ward, who's the chair of the Toronto district board, and I have met on a number of occasions with both the mayor and councillors, and senior staff. Everybody agrees in principle. The problem is that when we begin to work through the planning process, there's automatically a concern from the planning side that, "We don't want to do this. We'd rather do it the way we're doing it now, which is one instance, each at a time, and eventually we might get to the point that we recognize this is the way to go with public property."

The problem we're having, quite frankly, is that that will take forever, if we ever do it. Secondly, the boards

are now in a position, as I say, in Toronto where we may be looking at 100-plus pieces of property. We don't have time to do them one at a time. We still want to go through the process one at a time, but we're suggesting that the government state as an overarching principle that this be something that the city agree to.

Mr. Arnott: And it wouldn't cost the province a red cent to make this statement?

Mr. Carroll: Not to do this, no. We'll still look to the province for support, of course, through the normal capital funding programs, but no.

Mr. Arnott: But to encourage—

Mr. Carroll: But to encourage this.

1120

METRO AREA REPRESENTATIVES COUNCIL

The Acting Chair: I would ask the Metro Area Representatives Council to come before the committee. Thank you, gentlemen. I would ask you to state your name for the record. You will be allowed 10 minutes for your presentation, and then there will be five minutes of questions. The questions will go to the NDP. If you would like to begin.

Mr. Colin Hamilton: Thank you. My name is Colin Hamilton. I'm the chair of the Metro Area Representatives Council.

Mr. Ken Harvey: My name is Ken Harvey and I'm a parent.

Mr. Hamilton: I'd just like to start by explaining what MARC is. MARC is a coalition of about 20 Toronto not-for-profit agencies that provide services and supports to adults and children with developmental disabilities. Our membership includes Community Living Toronto, the Reena Foundation, Surrey Place Centre, the Family Service Association, Christian Horizons and on and on. We're also a member of the provincial partnership table which meets with the Ministry of Community and Social Services on a regular basis to discuss issues of funding and programming.

We're here today to talk a little bit about supporting our ministry's initiative around transformation of our services and the kinds of needs that we have in our agencies for additional supports from the province.

Mr. Harvey: As indicated, I'm a parent—a parent of a 48-year-old developmentally handicapped daughter named Janice. I'm also a member of the provincial network on developmental services, an affiliation of provincial organizations representing 250 agencies across the province that provide supports to individuals and families in the developmental services sector. The provincial network has been working with the Ministry of Community and Social Services on a plan to transform the developmentally handicapped sector.

As a parent, I'd like to briefly touch on some of the highlights of Janice's life because this is where I form my views on this sector. I suspect that our experience as

a family is somewhat typical of most families with a developmentally handicapped child.

Initially, Janice's issues involved many visits to a variety of medical disciplines looking for a solution to a problem which really had no solution. At school age, like most children, Janice enrolled at school, in her case a special ed school. One school that I can recall specifically involved a taxi ride right across half the city of Toronto starting at 7:30 each morning. More convenient locations were identified over time, although still on a segregated basis. Since that time, the situation has been improved dramatically with the introduction of school integration.

Age 21 was the next major phase in Janice's life, when she was no longer eligible for the public school system. At that time, she worked for a while in the school cafeteria and at a nursery school at our local church. Our experience, however, found that the initial enthusiasm to support a person with Janice's needs in a work environment tends to wane over time and her jobs were relatively short-lived. Eventually she was able to get into a day program operated by Community Living Toronto, where she has been for the past 15 years.

In our experience, day support programs for youth coming out of the school system are critical for both the individual and their family. Sector capacity is lacking, although MCSS has launched the Passport initiative which is aimed at this significant need.

I should indicate that Janice has two brothers and a sister who made it a point to include Janice in many of their social activities. When they married, it was difficult for Janice and her quality of life suffered. When a group home opening came along, she was pleased at the opportunity and has been happy there ever since. She continues to come home regularly and enjoys a strong family relationship.

On the subject of transformation: Minister Papatello initiated the transformation objective when she became Minister of Community and Social Services—I think that was about two and a half years ago—the initial steps in that transformation being the closure of the remaining institutions in Ontario, a move which was enthusiastically embraced by the provincial network. The stated goals of transformation were to achieve a system where access to supports for people with a developmental disability had to be fair and equitable, portable, flexible and sustainable.

In order to achieve these goals, five stages in the process have been identified in order to access support: independent planning; eligibility; an application process; an access process; and, ultimately, funding. Significant progress has been made on the documentation required for the first four of these stages, which appear consistent with the minister's stated goals of fairness, portability and flexibility.

One thrust of the transformation was the introduction of individualized funding. This is intended to provide portability and choice to the individual. There is a serious concern on our part about how effective choice can be

exercised given the lack of capacity in both the day program and residential areas.

In terms of this year's budget, while the transformation process is ongoing, the waiting lists for day supports and residential supports, particularly for individuals with aging parents, are long and growing and should be addressed now. I refer you to the statistical attachment to the written presentation that we lodged with the secretary.

This sector is not one of high visibility and does not enjoy a great deal of political clout. Over the recent past, however, the community living movement has made our sons and daughters more visible in the community, with encouraging results in terms of acceptance and understanding. I think the integration of schools has had a lot to do with that as well.

We've also joined collaboratively as a sector to work more closely with the ministry, mainly through the provincial network. We believe this is beneficial in achieving our mutual goals. The area where we've been less effective is in communicating with our elected representatives.

In order to ensure success in the transformation process, the network is collectively requesting the Treasurer of Ontario to provide \$200 million in base funding for this sector in the upcoming budget in order to accomplish the following:

(1) Create residential accommodation and day program spaces for adults with aging parents who are no longer equipped to support them.

(2) Create additional day program facilities for transitional youth to build on the Passport initiative.

(3) Enhance wages to a more competitive level to attract and retain qualified staff and provide for ongoing training in the sector.

(4) Provide for inflationary cost increases in agency budgets.

(5) Begin to implement the front end of the transformation agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for the opportunity to address your committee. I hope we've been able to provide you with a sense of the issues facing this sector. As you go about your duties as elected representatives, we ask for your support for this sector and the vulnerable people it represents, particularly as it relates to the upcoming budget.

The Chair: You have about a minutes left.

Mr. Hamilton: Maybe what we could do is refer you to the statistical report that's in your package that we tabled with you. This is just to give you an idea of the magnitude of the issue that we're dealing with, particularly in a community like Toronto. You'll notice that in the upper left-hand column, the number of people in Toronto who are applying for service and who are on a wait list for residential and day programming services is over 2,500 adults. That list is increasing by about 12% on an annual basis, or about 265 individuals. Last year in Toronto, in terms of creating spaces for people through vacancies as people die or move on, we created 30

residential spaces—that's all—and new funding added another 10 spaces. So if you like, 40 spaces were created in Toronto last year with additional funding.

You'll notice as well that on the right-hand side are the ages of caregivers. I think that's an interesting statistic, because although we only have about 1,000 ages on there—not everyone wants to give their age, and we all understand that—you can see that we have 11 parents on our wait list who are over the age of 90. We have over 70 parents waiting for service who are over the age of 80, and those are almost really unacceptable. We certainly, in Toronto, are trying hard to address that issue. But there's no creation of new beds for this particular group of adults.

1130

The majority of people on our wait list are looking for group home living—about 60% want that 24-hour, seven-day-a-week support. You will also notice that we also have a number of adults who have severe aggression and severe self-injurious behaviour. When we're talking about "severe," we have a young lady who lives in one of our programs, and severe self-injurious behaviour over a period of time has made her blind. One of her behaviours has been smashing her own face right around the eye level, and over a period of time she is now totally blind. That's the kind of severe behaviour we're talking about, and that is expensive. It's not inexpensive to provide those kinds of service, and we are really asking the government to consider our request for this additional \$200 million in the base budget for the upcoming budget to help address some of these issues.

The Chair: Thank you. We'll move to questioning and Mr. Prue of the NDP.

Mr. Prue: Thank you so much, and thank you for the statistics on the age of the caregiver, because that's the one—when we get calls in my office, and I'm sure all the MPPs are the same, it's generally from people who are 70 or 80 who are saying, "My God, what's going to happen when I die?" and, "How can my son or daughter be looked after?"

You're looking for \$200 million.

Mr. Hamilton: That's just in year one.

Mr. Prue: In year one, yes. How many people, for \$200 million, could we take off the waiting list? How many of these people could be looked after, and perhaps assuage the fears and concerns of 70-, 80- and 90-year-old parents?

Mr. Hamilton: I think, Michael, that this is going to be a long-term problem and issue for the province. I think one of the issues that we're trying to address with the province is that it's fine to close institutions and bring supports back into the community, but the province really needs to understand that that is at a cost. So the pressures that we're under, as agencies, are dealing with the provincial initiative around facility closure and the issue of aging parents. Another issue we're dealing with within the children's aid society is the number of children who have grown into adults and cannot get out of a children's bed—so the children's aid society is funding adults in

that sector. Two hundred million dollars isn't going to go that far in Toronto. It might mean that we could create another—again, we're talking, provincially, \$200 million—in Toronto, it might mean we could create another 20 beds a year but we could target those beds towards community living, and a Toronto initiative or a provincial initiative that addresses the community needs rather than the facility needs.

Mr. Prue: Because you've raised the issue: In terms of the closure of the three remaining facilities in Ontario, there are some who have suggested—and some have said it's not true—that in closing those, those very high-needs people will add to the list. They'll be looked after first, of course, because they'll have to be looked after first, but it will make it more difficult to try to eat into that backlog of 2,500 people. Do you see that happening?

Mr. Hamilton: In part. Some of the people that are coming out of the institutions, the price tag on those is quite enormous—we're talking about \$120,000 annually for some of those individuals. One of the other problems that we're facing in our sector is certainly having qualified staff to deal with those individuals, and that is another major issue. We are getting tremendous pressure from our unions on this issue, and I can forewarn whoever is creating the next government, whether it's the Liberals, the NDP—I'm not sure the PCs will be there, but that's a decision that the voters will make—and I must say that all three parties, when they were in power, did support the closing of all institutions. So it is a common goal amongst all parties; we applaud that.

However, word has it—and quite strongly; we're seeing it now—that the unions are looking for centralized bargaining. They want central bargaining, they want it to happen, they want to get the government and MCSS to the table. Their deadline is March 31, 2009. They are lining up everybody's collective agreements to end on that date. They've now got about 70 of us who are unionized, all closing contracts on March 31, 2009—this is the plan. I think that, as a province and as community providers, we need to really share the responsibility here and try to not just address the wait list but also to address the salary and wage issue and qualifications issue of our staff, because those are the individuals who are going to be providing service. We need quality service, which also means quality staff.

Mr. Harvey: But in answer to Mr. Prue's question, the institutions are over and above the statistics here.

Mr. Hamilton: Yes, they are over and above the statistics.

Mr. Harvey: Effectively, they are first in line.

The Chair: Thank you for the presentation.

Mr. Hamilton: Thank you very much.

TORONTO WESTERN HOSPITAL

The Chair: Now I call on Toronto Western Hospital to come forward, please.

Good morning. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be five minutes of questioning fol-

lowing that. Please identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Dr. Eric Massicotte: Good morning. My name is Eric Massicotte. I'm a neurosurgeon at the Toronto Western Hospital. I'd like to begin by thanking the committee for allowing me to speak to you this morning on what I consider to be a very critical situation, and I'd like to share that with you this morning.

What I'd like to do is first of all identify who the Toronto Western Hospital is—it's a big title. In fact, what I'm going to be talking about is the spine program within the Krembil neuroscience, identify ourselves and tell you what the critical situation is all about. I'll go through some of the challenges that we face and where we need some help. I know you've heard a lot of different people talk this morning from various interest groups, but what I'd like to do is try to put a face on some of the problems we're facing so that you can understand and relate to it.

The Krembil neuroscience is a priority program within Toronto Western, which is one of the hospitals of the University Health Network. The spine program consists of essentially four surgeons who offer complex spinal care for all of Ontario and, in fact, a great portion of Canada. The kind of care that we provide is highly specialized. It represents, on an annual basis, about 750 surgical cases and a little over 5,000 patient encounters a year among the four of us.

The challenge we face is that the resources we have at our disposal don't allow us to provide the standard of care that we need to for Ontarians and, in fact, for most of our patients who come through.

The program is unique in that it offers, like I said, complex spinal care. I'll give you a couple of concrete examples in a few minutes about what "complex surgical care" means. It also has two other mandates. One of them is with respect to research and associations like the Christopher Reeve Foundation, which has identified us as a centre of excellence; and the Rick Hansen Institute, a Canadian institution which has also identified us as a priority program for some of the research that we do with spinal cord injury patients.

The third mandate that we have, other than clinical research, is education. We're in charge of providing basically education for either orthopaedic or neurosurgical trainees with the level of care for complex surgical cases.

1140

So what I'd like to do now is basically tell you about a couple of the patients that I've managed in the last month and show you where the obstacles lie. The first one is a 44-year-old gentleman who presented to Toronto East General. This was sometime between Christmas and New Year's. He presented to Toronto East General with a two-month history of back pain. What prompted him to go to the emergency room there was that he was having trouble walking. When he was seen in the emergency room at Toronto East General, the emergency physician identified him as someone in dire need, did the proper investi-

gations, which included an MRI, which was done in the middle of the night, and then identified that the gentleman had a tumour, not only in his lung but also strangulating his spinal cord. That's why he was growing paralyzed from the belly button down.

This individual needed surgical attention, so the emergency physician, quite appropriately, consulted through a province-wide system called CritiCall, to try to identify someone who could look after this individual. I wasn't on call, but one of my colleagues was on call the night before and said, "We'd love to look after him but unfortunately we have no beds; we have no facilities to bring this person in." So he stayed at Toronto East General for approximately 24 hours, after which time we were able to accommodate him at our institution, so we brought this gentleman in. As soon as he came into our hospital, we rushed him to the operating room, operated on him and took the pressure off his spinal cord.

In terms of what will happen to this gentleman, his lung cancer will most likely kill him within a year. He won't live beyond that. However, his quality of life for that year—he'll be unable to walk independently. He can take a few steps using a walker, but most of the time he has to sit in a wheelchair. The question he had for me after I saw him, operated on him and post-operatively, because he did recover a little bit of function, he said, "What if I had come and seen you a day earlier? What if, instead of waiting at the Toronto East General for 24 hours, waiting to have my surgery, I had come right over? Would I be in this situation? Would I live any longer? Would I be paralyzed?" I had to tell that gentleman that he wouldn't have been. I would have probably been able to help him in the sense that he would be able to walk. His overall survival would have been improved marginally, but the quality of life for that time would have been significantly better. That kind of situation that I'm put in because of the resources that I have available makes it very hard for me to practise medicine here. This gentleman had to be told the truth about how the system is working, or not working in this case, for him.

You'll hear about surgeons being unhappy and leaving for other jurisdictions, particularly the States or even other provinces. A number of our colleagues who were trained here in Toronto have left for Calgary, Vancouver and some of the places in the States. Part of the reason for that is because we're put in situations where we have to prioritize patients and say, "Okay, if I operate on this person—they can wait a couple of weeks. This person can only wait a couple of days," so we have to prioritize and rank everything. So that's how we have to make decisions.

The second case I'd like to present to you is a young gentleman, mid-thirties, who has a very straightforward problem. It's not a life-threatening condition. It's called a herniated disc. Probably around this table there are a few of you who'll understand some of the symptoms, about pain in the back, pain shooting down into the leg with a little bit of numbness and weakness, but the kind of pain that stops you from being able to do a lot of things, such

as bending over and picking up your child—you can't pick up your two-year-old because of the pain that's shooting down your leg, difficulty getting around, and even in some cases it can be quite debilitating to the point where you can't go to work. Some of you may have had some of these symptoms, because they're quite frequent. In some cases, the symptoms get better and that's the end of the story, but in other cases you need surgery to get you better faster. Unfortunately, we're in a system where the resources are so restricted that I have to prioritize the patient who is going to get paralyzed with a tumour before the patient with the herniated disc. So the herniated disc patient takes an average of about six months to see me in consultation and then another two to three months before I can even take them to the operating room. So for that period of time, what happens to that patient is that they're basically debilitated at home and not able to do anything, not able to go to work.

So one of the reasons why I'm here talking to you today is to just illustrate the importance of our program, albeit small, to provide care and to help some of these people get back on track, get back to a better quality of life a little bit faster. When you hear about this brain drain or this exodus of surgeons leaving for other jurisdictions, part of it is because some of these other jurisdictions have realized this and have said, "Okay, we need to put in some resources to make sure that these priority programs can provide the care that people truly deserve."

The Chair: Thank you. The questioning goes to the government.

Mr. Arthurs: I'm not seeing that I'm going to have extensive questions; you've been quite clear. You haven't put a number around what you would need, but you've identified a level of priority.

I guess what really strikes me is that this is one program, and we heard, when we were in Hamilton, about bariatric surgery, which has to do with weight loss issues, and a research program there. It's a similar situation. A doctor had been recruited from Germany to come and set up a program, and yet we don't have funding in place to actually do the surgery here. He's sending patients to Rochester in that particular case and wondering, having been recruited, whether he should stay in Ontario, whether it makes sense for him to do that.

Your comments: One has to consider where they can best provide the service and use their skills with various programs. Any sense of what level of resource we'd have to apply to your program, as an example, to meet your needs? There's always going to be someone waiting, it doesn't matter what we do. We just can't build that level of capacity in the system.

Dr. Massicotte: Of course. I think that in the handout I've provided there's a figure of \$5 million. That's above some of the funds that we've been able to secure through the operating budget that we have at our hospital plus some of the industry support that we have. This would be to not only retain the people we have but also to possibly even recruit a fifth person in order to provide more

constant care. This money doesn't go into my pockets; this money goes to providing the infrastructure that's absolutely essential to look after things. And doing the surgery is one part.

One of the things to appreciate is that some of the surgeries we have—you know, most people think about spine surgery and they say, "Oh, yeah, the odds aren't very good," but in fact that's not true. The technologies have advanced to the point where we're able to operate very safely and provide a delivery of care that is, for the most part, highly beneficial to the patients. So with \$5 million, we'd be able to not only bolster the program that we have but also take on more patients and cut down on that waiting list. I think waiting nine months to be seen and operated on so that you can get back to work—I mean, the surgery I'm talking about for the lumbar disc is done as a day surgery procedure, so you come in in the morning and you go home that afternoon. Some patients go back to work as early as two to three weeks. That's someone who, instead of spending nine months laid up, unable to work and unable to pay taxes etc., is able to get back to work within two to three weeks. Everybody wins there. The patient wins, and we have to consider the implication to the family. We see this all the time. They're in the hospital, and the whole family is around the bedside saying, "We can't handle this." If we can get these people back up on their feet and back in a functional state, it's a win-win situation for everyone.

Mr. Arthurs: This is the only program in the province? You're providing service province-wide?

Dr. Massicotte: We're not the only program that does these surgeries. What's unique about our program is the mandate with regards to the complexity of the cases we do. Some of the surgical cases that we have—and I brought some presentations with me for those of you who are interested in seeing pictures. We do reconstructions of the spine that extend from the head all the way down to the sacrum because of distortion through degeneration or cancer or various processes. We're one of the few centres in Ontario that is able to provide this. Multiple centres provide some of the more straightforward surgeries, but our centre is unique in the sense that we take on the more complex, and with respect to the research that we do and the education.

The Chair: Thank you for your submission.

For the committee, checkout time is 1 o'clock, and lunch will be served in the restaurant.

We are recessed until 1 o'clock.

The committee recessed from 1150 to 1300.

REENA, TOBY AND HENRY BATTLE DEVELOPMENTAL CENTRE

The Chair: The standing committee on finance and economic affairs will now come to order in our afternoon session in Barrie.

I would call on the Reena, Toby and Henry Battle Developmental Centre to come forward, please.

You can sit anywhere you like, and they'll run the microphones for you. You have 10 minutes for your presentation this afternoon, and there may be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Ms. Sandy Keshen: Thank you very much. I'm Sandy Keshen. I'm the CEO of Reena. I thank you very much for allowing us to come and present. With me is Carolynn Morrison, past chair of Reena and a parent.

Ms. Carolynn Morrison: Thank you, Sandy. Also, it is my privilege to serve on the developmental disabilities service council for Toronto, and I presently am co-chair of the Toronto forum. I thank you for this opportunity to come and speak to you this afternoon.

It's true that I have been a board chair and I work on other committees, but I think the job that I am proudest of is that of being a mother to a son living with autism, and I would like to share just a little of our story with you.

When you hear the words, "You're going to have a baby," your heart is filled with love and your mind races with the dreams and hopes that this child will bring.

The child is perfect, and he reaches every milestone on cue. We now have a daughter and a son, and our family is complete.

During the "terrible twos," the tantrums seem to lengthen and become more frequent, and we don't move beyond the echolalic phase of speech.

At the age of three, you receive the diagnosis of autism. Your family is numb. Your minds are shut down. Your heart aches and your life will never, ever be the same.

We looked for services and we were not able to find any. We both had careers, and so a decision was made to become a single-income family, a very difficult thing to do when living in a city like Toronto. When not providing caregiving, the time was spent researching and resourcing information that would assist us to understand and work with our son's disability.

At every turn, it was discouraging to find that there were no answers. We struggled to function as a normal family responding to the everyday lives and requests that you and I always share. When I needed help, I turned to my family, and was very fortunate. I developed a respite team around my family members. However, with the sudden death of my father, my respite team dissolved.

It's at this time of your life, when you are in the middle of a crisis, that you find, with a child with autism or any developmental disability, that you have to turn to outside sources for assistance. Thus begins our journey through autism.

Our son is physically beautiful. He's verbal and very affectionate. He's 27. However, overshadowing all of these wonderful characteristics are the aggressions that are part of his autism. By the age of 14, he was six foot four and weighed 190 pounds, and his aggressive episodes could last anywhere from 20 minutes to four hours. One terrible day, I sustained significant injuries and my

husband and I realized that we were working with a situation or trying to control a situation that was definitely out of our control. Once again, our lives were thrown into chaos. Where would we go? Where would we find appropriate services for our son?

During this time of trying to find crisis care, two options were given to my husband and me. The first one was to place our son into foster care, and he would receive the services required to care for a child with autism. The second one was, because I had sustained injury, that if I were to press charges, my son would then be arrested and would be taken to Penetang, and there would be provided services for autism. I have to tell you, both of these options were totally unacceptable to my husband and me. For two parents who had devoted their lives to their child, who loved their child and wanted their child to be a part of their lives, these were not even considered to be the darkest option for us.

It has been our desire to have our child as part of our family, and in the crisis time that we needed, Lee was placed in a facility that was 50 miles from our home. We brought our son home every weekend. Of the 620 weekends that he remained 50 miles from our home, we only missed 21 weekends bringing him home, because we know it's valuable to have him in our lives and we know that we are valuable in his life.

We discovered the document Making Services Work for People, and I have to tell you, that was the first ray of sunshine that our family discovered. In Making Services Work for People, it was stressed that it was important that the clients remain close to home geographically, as well as emotionally attached to their family.

So you ask me today: Do I speak for transformation? Yes, I do, because this document transformed our lives. Together with 12 of my family members and friends, we put together a document that outlined a life plan for our son. We did not realize, however, after putting a year and a half of work in on this document, that the funding that Lee had initially received was not transportable. So thus began, again, our journey of finding funding for our son.

We were sure that we wanted Lee to be in a safe haven. We wanted Lee to be in a facility that provided caring staff, well-trained staff who valued him but, more importantly, valued the family commitment that we had made to our son.

We did, with the grateful thanks of our family to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, receive the funding for our son, and at that time we went out looking for services. It became increasingly clear to us that where Lee could be best served and our family involved, with the staff and the caring that we wanted for him—we looked and sought service from a transfer payment agency.

I have to tell you, it has been five and a half years and we have never once regretted that decision. Lee lives the best of both lives. Five days a week he's in a caring community with staff who understand his needs, who work creatively to develop strategies to bring forward programs that will encourage him and interest him, who

will build on the life skills he has, as well as valuing the input of his family.

There are two distinct reasons I believe the agency we selected worked. First of all, it's because the staff are well trained, which brings me to a point that I really need to stress here today: Our sector desperately needs to have training and development for the individuals who will look after our children now and in the future. We need to have staff who understand the pharmacology of the medications they are dispensing to our clients; we need to have staff who are comfortable with the changes in their behaviours; we need to have staff who are willing to work with the disabilities they have, who are willing to pursue ongoing training to best provide them with the skills they need to do this job. But far more than that, we need to compensate the individuals who are caring for very precious people in our community, and those are our children and the children to come.

These people need to feel valued, they need to be compensated on a level playing field when they enter the career of their choice and they need to have the opportunity to advance. We feel that agencies, organizations and community colleges need to come on board and help in the training of staff. With transformation of services, more and more families are going to be looking to trained and capable staff to care for their children.

I want to ensure that we understand that our family's story is only one of 1,000 stories that you could hear today, but it has been my privilege to come and just share a little bit of what our struggle has been and where it has taken us and why transformation is definitely an important thing for us to look to. As I said, the one thing I feel very strongly about is training and development and resources put into the staffing for the children of today and the children of tomorrow. I thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak to you, not only for the families I believe I could represent, but also for the children who have voices that you will never have the opportunity to hear. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. There are about two minutes left, if you want to make further comment.

Ms. Keshen: Let me just thank you again for allowing us to speak. I've circulated documents that explain who we are. We're part of a large consortium across the province working towards improving the supports for people in the developmental field.

As we are looking at individual families who are aging, we need to look at how to support them in their community close to family. One of the issues for me would be how creative we are in finding alternative housing models that allow for senior adults. A little interesting statistic: In 1973, our individuals who were developmentally delayed died at 39; the oldest person currently in my group home is 89. So we have an aging developmental population, and one of the important elements is—I'm going to be speaking for another sector, which may sound strange—partnering with long-term care as part of our process of inclusion and developing cross-sectorial—eliminating silos. I will stop at that, again thanking you.

1310

The importance of training and the importance of salary equity with education for our assistants is part of the process of growth.

In terms of transformation—Carolyn hasn't mentioned that fully. The process that Carolyn's family went through added an element of support to an agency, because she brought her own resources: her time, her efforts. Within transformation, that's encouraged, and we support it fully.

If you have any questions, we're here to answer them.

The Chair: This round of questioning goes to the official opposition. Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): I do have some questions. I thank you for testifying before the committee.

You used the word “transformation.” I read your transformation agenda and the call for collaboration and flexibility, and there are some very specific suggestions here: individualized funding for families; tax incentives to encourage families to purchase homes; and again, improved opportunities to collaborate between families, government and service providers.

As MPPs, we all have spoken with many, many people and parents of children with disabilities. I think I heard you mention the need to eliminate silos. I know you made reference to the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Many people also have to relate to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. There are silos there, and it puts a tremendous amount of responsibility on an individual to try to coordinate these ministries. You mentioned assessment, and then there's the issue of case management. I've talked with parents who've been in the position of being the case manager for the case managers—to coordinate and to try to pull the myriad of professionals—oftentimes, over the years, they will have been dealing with dozens and dozens of professionals. There seems to be a lack of co-operation, a lack of coordination, with many of the people that I have spoken with. Do you have any further ideas on how we can get around that?

Ms. Keshen: I'll speak about a new document that we were involved in preparing. It's called Connections. It's a document that was built within our sector but really involves the school board. Connections is a document for families to enable them, with appropriate partners, to plan early for their son or daughter and connect. We'll be delighted to send you copies of that document. I think it's a powerful tool for eliminating some of those silos in education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

In moving from adult services to long-term care, we also have prepared a document called Protocol for Movement to Long-Term Care—again, agencies playing a pivotal role in supporting families through transition. We do a lot of training for families. We have an extensive training program called Family Involvement, teaching our staff to engage with families in a meaningful way,

and now we will be doing supportive workshops for people on the whole Connections document.

That's one small answer.

Mr. Barrett: I think that's great, just the whole concept of planning alone, and that it's coming from you. I think it's incumbent on this Ontario government to perhaps play a larger role in the broader, more comprehensive planning; not only planning but organizing and taking a leadership role, monitoring, the control function—essentially, management. There perhaps needs to be more planning and management from the top, rather than separate professions, separate ministries, separate departments, separate agencies, doing their own thing, not knowing what's going on next door.

Ms. Keshen: I agree with you. I sit on the local health integrated network as a board member, and I know that it isn't only about health there and it isn't only about social services here; it is about that continuum of support to the individual and family. The educational piece comes into play at colleges and universities. One of the important elements we need to put on the table is the whole issue of creative housing options for families. It's no longer a group home model; it's a model that is inclusive within a community.

So, yes, I fully support, and I believe our government is supportive of, integrated supports across the system. Thank you for the encouragement.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

ONTARIO SOCIETY
FOR THE PREVENTION
OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

The Chair: I call on the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to come forward, please. Good afternoon. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Mr. Craig Mabee: Good afternoon. My name is Craig Mabee. I'm the acting CEO and director of development for the Ontario SPCA. I am joined today by Mr. Jim Sykes, chair of the Ontario SPCA board of directors, and chief inspector Hugh Coghill.

On behalf of the board, the volunteers and the animals that we rescue and care for on a daily basis across this province, I thank you for this opportunity. The Ontario SPCA is a non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to the protection and welfare of animals since 1873. The Ontario SPCA has 22 branches and 31 affiliated societies providing education, investigation and enforcement, animal care, adoption services and shelter to tens of thousands of animals every year. We rely on charitable donations and fundraising to fulfill our mandate under the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. These donations are not consistent and make long-term planning extremely difficult, often leaving us in a financial crisis.

Our legislated mandate prevents us from accessing some funding. Although we are a registered charity, we are ineligible to apply for Trillium funds because we provide law enforcement services that fall under the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. We do not receive government funding for our police service operations. Under the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, society investigators have police powers to enforce the act, the Criminal Code of Canada and other provincial legislation as it pertains to animal cruelty, yet we are not funded like other Ontario police services. We rely on our donors to fund the investigation and enforcement services that we provide. Our donors do not have the capacity to fund all the services that we are expected and mandated to provide.

We do not receive funding for humane education, adoption and other preventive strategies. We do not receive grants from the proceeds of crime fund. The government has recently provided grants under the Civil Remedies Act totalling \$763,000 to assist victims of crime, yet we are not considered for such grants. Our ask today is for the government to work co-operatively with the Ontario SPCA so that we might be considered for appropriate government funding programs.

Assisting other enforcement agencies. Our investigators work with agencies as well as police services across Ontario: for federal legislation, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency on the Health of Animals Act; and the RCMP and Canadian Wildlife Services on the Migratory Birds Convention Act. In Ontario, with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, we support and participate in the Meat Inspection Act, the Livestock Community Sales Act and the Dead Animal Disposal Act. With the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, we work co-operatively in enforcing the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. We are called in by government ministries on a regular basis to perform services of the province unfunded, whereas these acts and enforcement services, listed above under these ministries, are publicly funded.

Our investigators may be put at risk due to a lack of proper equipment. The Ontario SPCA investigators are mandated under the OSPCA Act to enforce the animal cruelty laws. Under the act, society investigators have police powers to enforce the act. We are also a named agency in the revised Dog Owners' Liability Act—the pit bull legislation. As I mentioned before, we are called in by government ministries on a regular basis to perform services for the province, unfunded, by OMAFRA, MNR and EMO. We are called in to deal with emergencies like the spring 2006 Kashechewan evacuation. Inspectors today are in need of enhanced communications systems for tracking officers and vehicles in rural Ontario; personal protective equipment such as safety equipment, puncture-proof vests and green fluorescent safety vests; all vehicles are to be equipped with emergency flasher lights, as indicated by the Ministry of Labour; defensive driving training; and most importantly pre-exposure vaccinations for rabies and hepatitis A and B.

We believe that the government pays for similar safety equipment for police services and MNR staff. Our ask of you today is one-time funding to address safety issues for our inspectorate. We estimate rabies pre-exposure vaccinations to cost \$220,000; personal protective equipment—puncture-proof vests—cost \$109,440; green fluorescent emergency vests, \$3,500; emergency lights on vehicles, \$43,989; hepatitis vaccines, \$37,620; enhanced rural communication system, \$26,500; and defensive driver training in rural Ontario in winter conditions, \$52,788.

1320

Our third point is capital needs. As a direct result of our frequent need to use bequest and legacy dollars to subsidize the ongoing animal care and investigative services, the Ontario SPCA branches and local affiliate societies have massive capital demands and limited capital reserves. Many of our aging shelter facilities are in chronic need of repair due to the lack of funds. We are not eligible for Ontario Strategic Infrastructure Financing Authority funding. Our ask today: an initial one-time capital investment of \$3.5 million to be used to leverage matching support from local communities in support of both Ontario SPCA branches and affiliated local societies.

The Ontario SPCA is the only welfare organization in the province authorized by statute, the OSPCA act, to exercise police powers in enforcing animal cruelty laws, and it works closely with the provincial enforcement agencies, including police forces across Ontario. However, it is not a government agency and does not receive government funding to support the day-to-day animal welfare and protection service it is mandated to provide. Consequently, the organization must rely on donations, often legacy gifts, to meet the society's immediate operational needs. It has no surplus funding to provide safety equipment for the investigators or assistance to shelters in chronic need of repair.

Fair and equal treatment is required for animal welfare and protection services to be preserved. We urge the government to support the Ontario SPCA and its affiliated societies to remove barriers to otherwise appropriate government funding programs, provide one-time funding for essential safety equipment for our inspectors and agents, and provide an initial one-time infusion into capital funds accessible to both local branches and affiliate societies to be leveraged and supported from local communities. Thank you.

The Chair: Further comment? If none, we'll move to questioning. This is for the NDP.

Mr. Prue: I have been on the finance committee now for four or maybe five years. In that entire time, I have never received something which we received this morning, and that is a fax from an individual asking us not to fund someone. We got one this morning asking us not to listen to your request.

I don't know whether you know this gentleman, but he has said—just a couple of lines from it, because I want to hear your response. All members of the committee have

this. So do Minister Kwinter and the Ombudsman of Ontario, and the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Finance were sent this very document. He writes, in part, "The committee cannot in good conscience consider the OSPCA's request for additional funding without fully investigating the mass resignation spring 2006 of 29 OSPCA directors, including the chair and the treasurer, just after the province approved a one-time \$1.8-million grant to the organization."

It goes on, at the end: "Please, do not pour our taxpayer dollars into this unstable, controversial organization. We demand a full public inquiry before additional funds are invested in Ontario's animal welfare system."

I wanted to be totally fair and upfront to you. We all got this morning. Please comment.

Mr. Jim Sykes: Sure. I'll respond to that as the board chair. The chronology in that document talks about shortly after or immediately after a \$1.8-million investment in the OSPCA. There was in fact an investment made recognizing the accumulated deficit of the organization at that point in time and a shortfall in those years of bequests and legacy money that would help to prop up the operating cost. The province did commission part one of a Grant Thornton review that dealt with the financial aspects and accountability of the OSPCA. In fact, that Grant Thornton report, which was released, I believe, in February to the government and about six months later to the OSPCA, recognized and recommended ongoing annualized funding of investigation and enforcement services in the province of Ontario. It made some recommendations about accountability measures and management control issues that needed to be implemented in the Ontario SPCA, and for the most part, those things have been done.

The second part of the Grant Thornton review was a governance review which has been ongoing this past fall and the preliminary information was shared with our board last weekend. The final document will be produced by Grant Thornton in the next week or two and we expect to see it in February. But again, any of the accountability issues that were recognized, the current board has already begun to deal with.

After the board members resigned—in fact, one of the board members who resigned was the former chair of the Hamilton-Burlington SPCA, which is the affiliate I represent. Those individuals and some others of us in affiliates wrote to Minister Kwinter and Premier McGuinty asking that the government at that point step in, suspend the constitution or the OSPCA act and the board and work with us; the government to appoint a supervisor and work with us to try to get the organization back on track. The response to that message was, "This is a private organization. You do great work but you've got to solve it yourself."

In fact, we have virtually an entirely new board and we've embarked on that process. Some of the issues with strategic planning and accountability: As we reviewed the report last week, the recommendations from Grant Thornton, we're actually ahead of those.

So I think the public investigation that's recommended has been done in two parts now: the financial review and the governance review. The current board of directors and senior management are very cognizant of those issues and have begun to deal with all of them.

I guess one of the things I would suggest is that the recommendations also stated that there be ongoing annualized funding for the OSPCA based on our commitment to do those things and, at this point in time, the advice we've received is that that will not be forthcoming.

Mr. Prue: Do I still have time?

The Chair: About a minute.

Mr. Prue: In the minute, I'd just like to talk about what you call "our ask." It's not a huge sum of money, what you're asking for here. You're asking for money for rabies pre-exposure vaccine, personal protective equipment, hepatitis vaccine—those things. What would be the consequences of not getting this additional funding?

Mr. Hugh Coghill: I suppose one of the consequences, if we don't have the funding and we're not able to provide the proper personal protective equipment for our enforcement officers, is that somebody is going to get hurt or perhaps killed in the line of their duty. We're investigating over 16,000 complaints in the course of a year. We execute 200 to 300 search warrants in the course of a year across the province. When we're executing a warrant, we usually have the police come with us to keep the peace and we try to stand behind the largest police officer who has a bulletproof vest because we don't have that. But that won't protect us on the routine investigations that we go into, in the number of 16,000-plus per year. That's one issue.

Rabies pre-exposure vaccine: It's available for Ministry of Natural Resources staff at no charge to them, paid for by their employer. It's about \$1,100 per set of vaccines for an individual. We're dealing with rabies vector species on a daily basis, and our people just don't have that protection. Post-exposure treatment, that's paid for by the government, costs between \$2,000 and \$2,500, so it's more economical actually to provide the pre-exposure vaccinations for the staff so that they have some level of protection from rabies.

Those are just two of the issues that are on there.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

GREAT LAKES INTERNATIONAL MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Chair: Now I call on the Great Lakes International Marine Advisory Committee to come forward, please. Good afternoon, gentlemen. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There could be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Captain John Greenway: Very good. Thank you and good afternoon. By way of introduction, my name is John Greenway. I'm currently chair of the Great Lakes International Marine Advisory Committee. That committee is

a group of industry—when I say "industry": marine companies, ship owners, ship operators, our labour unions and professional associations—that provide guidance in marine training issues to Georgian College.

1330

With me today, to my left, is Jay Notay, dean of the Owen Sound campus, and to my right is Archie Dickson, director for the marine programs, also at the Owen Sound Georgian College campus.

I guess a twofold purpose today: One is certainly the most important, which is the solicitation of some partnership funding support that we're looking for from the provincial government, but also hopefully a bit of an education for the panel here, our members of Parliament, on what our marine industry is all about and the importance it has certainly for Ontario's transportation system as well as the environmental, safety and economic well-being of Ontario.

In your handout are three documents, one being a glossy folder, which is the company I work for. It just gives you a flavour of some of our ships and what our ships do in terms of carriage of cargoes throughout the Great Lakes and the seaway. Another is the briefing notes from which I'm talking to you. The other document is entitled Marine Industry and Training Infrastructure for Ontario/Partnerships for Economic Prosperity.

There is only one training facility in Ontario—and, in fact, in central Canada—which is in danger of closing because of its outdated equipment and inability to meet current needs, both for the industry as well as for international training standards. Should this facility close, Ontario's transportation infrastructure is going to be at a significant competitive disadvantage.

For your information, we have made various representations to the Ministries of Transportation; Economic Development and Trade; Public Infrastructure Renewal; and Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister Cansfield from the Ministry of Transportation has certainly recognized the need and the importance of marine transportation for Ontario.

Our ask is for \$8.4 million, which is a total capital upgrade solution that will provide state-of-the-art equipment for Ontario. We've approached this in a partnership approach. That partnership includes our marine industry, the college and the region of Owen Sound, which have committed to \$1.4 million, and we have just recently received advice from the federal government, through Transport Canada, for a further \$1.4 million. So our ask for the province, for your consideration, is \$5.5 million to complete this project.

We are currently unable to obtain this training in Ontario. We have to go out of province and, in some cases, out of country to get it. There's a distinct possibility that without an early commitment to this funding, our marine program will be suspended this year because we will not be able to meet international training standards.

I'd like to talk to you a little bit about the marine industry. Last year, we moved 75 million tonnes of cargo

on the Great Lakes, primarily between Ontario and the United States, and also down the St. Lawrence Seaway. The combined total tonnage moved on the Great Lakes by both US and Canadian carriers exceeds 175 million tonnes of cargo. Our customers make up the economic industry of Ontario: the steel industry, with Dofasco, Stelco, Algoma; the grain industry, with the Ontario wheat board, the Canadian Wheat Board; the power generation industry, with Ontario Hydro; the salt industry, with Sifto, Canadian Salt; the cement industry; the sugar industry. I could go on and on about the products we move. Add to that the passenger ferry industry in Canada and the tour boat industry with tourism. I hope this will give you a flavour of what our impact is in Ontario.

Ports on the Great Lakes move 120 million tonnes of cargo. One ship is equivalent to 850 trucks off of our roads and 350 railroad cars. In your documents, you'll see a bit of a chart that shows the environmental benefits of marine transportation. In terms of energy efficiency or the fuel savings on cargo moved, we're 10 times more efficient than trucks, we're seven times more efficient in terms of air emissions than trucks, and our accident spill record is very good.

Impact to Canada: Over \$9 billion on the GDP; over \$2.2 billion annually to Ontario's GDP; and the ports and communities from Thunder Bay all the way down to Cornwall in Ontario are certainly heavily reliant on our marine industry.

In the document we've provided a few examples of the impact. In the Niagara region: \$200 million in wages and salaries; 2,000 employees; \$300 million in goods and services. Some 31% of Hamilton-Wentworth's GDP is related to the transportation industry with the Stelcos, Dofascos—all of the industries in Ontario. Every 10,000 tonnes of cargo that moves in or out of a port, by economists' standards, contribute \$500,000 to that local economy.

I guess the point I'm trying to get at is that this isn't just a request for the marine industry, it's a request for Ontario and Ontario's infrastructure needs. In Ontario, 18,000-plus employees are directly employed in the marine industry. We have 1,300 employee shortfalls projected in terms of skilled labour over the next 10 years.

And that's kind of our story. So we're asking for the \$5.5 million from the Ontario government as a partnership approach to the solution. We've seen certainly in other regions across Canada—Newfoundland, Quebec, Nova Scotia, British Columbia, to mention a few—where the provinces are heavily involved in the marine transportation infrastructure and support their training schools. Unfortunately, we have not seen that in the past in Ontario, and that's one of the things we're soliciting.

I've talked to you about the economic and environmental benefits of marine transportation and how the marine industry with short sea shipping can certainly play a role in Ontario's transportation infrastructure as we go forward. It will give Ontario a world-class training centre at Georgian College that will certainly be capable

of research and development, emergency response training, immigrant and foreign-student training, and the economic benefits, again, for the Owen Sound region and for Ontario as a whole.

We also feel that it meets the provincial goals, our government goals: technology and innovation; education and skills development; supporting the economic growth of Ontario. It's basically a win-win. And when I say a win-win, it's certainly a win-win for my industry. We need the training and the training structure that supports it. It's a win-win for our industries that we support because it will provide the skilled labourers and the training that we currently cannot get in Ontario. And it's a win-win for Ontario because it forms part of the infrastructure that we need to meet transportation needs into the future.

So that's my pitch from the industry. I don't know whether the representatives from Georgian College, who are with me, have any further comments. I'll turn it over to them.

The Chair: You have about a minute left.

Mr. Jay Notay: On our end, John Greenway has actually covered quite a lot. The college's stance on this is that we're providing a service to the marine industry. So, as he's saying, this is a true partnership approach that we're taking. Outside of that, we're willing to answer any specific questions you might have.

The Chair: Thank you for the submission. This round goes to the government.

Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to share my time with Mrs. Mitchell.

As a member from Hamilton, very often the marine transportation industry is the unsung hero of our economy. As one of the busiest ports on the Great Lakes, if not the busiest, we have been trying to promote the concept of Highway H₂O, and I'm sure you're probably familiar with it. You certainly highlighted the fact that one ship would take 850 trucks off the highway. Can you imagine the savings that would create, both environmentally and in wear and tear, as well as countless accidents and so on?

But I guess my question to you is, how much has the federal government been able to help? Provincially, we can do a lot, but we need help from our federal cousins. Have you appealed to them? Because that would certainly add to the intensity of the advocacy.

1340

Captain Greenway: That's certainly a valid point, and we have advocated strongly with them. Historically, the simulators, old technology that currently exists at Georgian College, were 100% funded by the federal government, Transport Canada, marine safety. As I'm sure you know in the province, the feds are continually downloading; they're getting out of this type of infrastructure support. Unfortunately, I don't think Ontario in the past has had a lot of the labour market initiative agreements that other provinces have seen that allow federal funding to flow into certain sectors for training.

Basically, we have lobbied long and hard with Transport Canada for this upgrade. This \$1.4 million they've committed is a one-off and that's it—that's what we've been told—and they are getting out of the business of training and supporting of training.

Ms. Marsales: That's unfortunate.

The Chair: Mrs. Mitchell.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you, gentlemen. You know I'm the member from Huron-Bruce, so we know about shipping and we know about nuclear.

Mr. Prue: And you know about salt.

Mrs. Mitchell: And we know about salt, yes, and grain and everything. We see a lot of the boats going by.

I have a few questions. As a percentage basis of the enrolment, how many stay in marine and how many go into the nuclear industry? Just so I have it in my head.

Mr. Notay: The majority are going to the marine industry. However, as the dean of the campus, I am looking at opportunities where we can kind of blend this program as well as new programs, specifically for the nuclear industry to build on the synergies that we currently have. We do have students who go to the Bruce nuclear program. Having said that, this particular ask is a benefit not only to post-secondary. We have about 150 post-secondary students between our navigation and engineering programs, but we also train over 1,000 mariners a year who come to the campus to get the training they require to maintain their currency. That is another significant component of what we do.

Mrs. Mitchell: Okay. I wanted to know how many were enrolled and the percentage.

As to the training centre, the emergency training, what do you see that encompassing: primarily marine, or that those skills can be taken over into the nuclear industry as well?

Mr. Notay: There's definitely a bigger plan involved here. Marine is the ask, but there are several areas that we can expand into. There is a plan in place internally at the college level where we're looking at building nuclear and other forms of emergency response that build on not only the marine sector but other sectors as well.

Mrs. Mitchell: How much do you see the emergency portion of it encompassing of the total program?

Mr. Notay: Are you talking post-secondary or are you talking—

Mrs. Mitchell: Post-secondary.

Mr. Notay: I would say that from a post-secondary perspective, the marine would still have a larger majority of the time that's spent. This is more for the navigation program as opposed to the engineering program. There are two distinct programs. The majority would be for the navigation. But once again, the emergency response would be more focused on, I would say, the certificate corporate training side, where we do get a larger proportion of individuals who aren't there for a year or two years but are there for points of time throughout the training cycle.

Mrs. Mitchell: Chair, how much time is left?

The Chair: You don't have any—very timely, right on. Thank you for your submission.

CALEDONIA CITIZENS ALLIANCE

The Chair: I would ask the Caledonia Citizens Alliance to come forward, please. Good afternoon. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Mr. Frank Stoneman: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Frank Stoneman, and this is Ron Howden. We are here representing the Caledonia Citizens Alliance this afternoon. We do have a presentation; we're just waiting for it to come up onscreen and we will get underway shortly.

At this time, we'd like to take the opportunity to thank you all for having us here today to present. This is a little bit out of our normal area, being up here in Barrie. However, the information that we're going to provide today is critical throughout the entire province.

I'm going to get started while this comes up and we can join in as it goes, because I know we've got some time constraints here.

I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about who we are and why we formed, to give you some background and an update as to the situation in Caledonia and talk to you a little bit about why we are here today.

The Caledonia Citizens Alliance is a group of Caledonia and area citizens who have informally and voluntarily responded to the First Nations protest. The alliance functions as a voice and advocate for recovery and renewal for the community, businesses, households and service clubs by providing information, support and planning. The reason we formed was that early in the occupation, there was a tremendous void in communications from various levels of government to the residents and businesses in Caledonia. As various groups organized and identified themselves, the Caledonia Citizens Alliance was a coalition of these groups along with some of the other residents from Caledonia. It is our belief that keeping the community together and informed is essential in keeping the situation from turning volatile. We have come together to respond to the fact that our community has become involved in this situation through no fault of its own and with minimal involvement in the resolution.

To give you a little bit of background, Caledonia is a town of almost 11,000 people in Haldimand county. Haldimand county's population is 45,000. Caledonia has experienced an explosion of growth in the past 25 years, doubling its size over that period and quadrupling its size over the past 40 years. Mining operations to the north of the town and the Highway 6 bypass and the Six Nations reserve to the west of the town limit the growth to the south and the east. Caledonia is a classic bedroom community because of its proximity to Hamilton and Highway 403.

Caledonia and Haldimand county were both poised to benefit from the implementation of the province's greenbelt legislation. However, on February 28, 2006, a group of natives from Six Nations took occupation of a development on the southern edge of Caledonia called the Douglas Creek Estates. These occupiers claim that this land was not properly surrendered back in the 1840s. For almost two months, the occupation was quiet and held mostly to the property itself. However, on April 20, 2006, the OPP raided the property, under court order, to remove protestors. The raid failed to remove the protestors from the property, and the town of Caledonia became involved when barricades were erected on all north-south routes going through and around Caledonia, except for one: a tar-and-chip local access road that was already overdue for reconstruction. Caledonia became collateral damage and remains the same today.

As to the current situation in Caledonia, the effects of the occupation on business: Even with assistance for businesses from the province, overall, retail business is still down dramatically. Prior to the occupation, Six Nations represented anywhere from 25% to 75% of some businesses' client base. On a regional scale, businesses at the Lake Erie business park are reporting losses due to the barricade of the railway. Some unconfirmed reports show at least \$150 million in additional expenses incurred by the Big Three at Lake Erie—Imperial Oil, Stelco and Ontario Power Generation—due to the barricade of the railway. Layoffs and staff cutbacks are starting to hurt the local community.

As to the effect of the occupation on residents, the residents have been affected differently by the experience, and tremendous stress and strain have been placed on our social services. Homeowners adjacent to DCE have had to live in the face of constant harassment and intimidation from the occupiers. Families have been torn apart, friendships have been ruined and jobs have been lost, directly due to the occupation. We believe the healing process will be lengthy; however, the healing process cannot begin until the issues of ownership and occupation have been addressed.

As to the effect of the occupation on local property values, there has been a 0.5% decrease in the average house sale price over the past 11 months, while surrounding communities have seen a 5% to 10% rise in the average house sale price over the same period. There's been a 5% increase in the number of listings over the same period. Homeowners adjacent to DCE claim their property values have dropped anywhere from 15% to 40%. The average number of days on the market has slightly increased over the same period a year ago, mostly due to houses being listed with no viable offers being presented.

1350

As far as the effect of the occupation on our municipal infrastructure, Haldimand county's already crumbling infrastructure took a beating from April 20 to May 24. Barricades on the Highway 6 bypass and Argyle Street resulted in all north-south traffic being diverted down

one secondary county road. Before the barricades went up, these secondary roads were already in need of repair. These roads were not built to withstand this type of traffic and weight, and to add insult to injury, the barricade of the railway resulted in more truck traffic going down these roads.

As far as the effect of the occupation on social services, our social services are being overloaded and will continue to have tremendous pressure placed upon them for the near and far future. The funnel is getting close to empty and we need help.

Now I'd like to address why we are here today. We are concerned for the future of Caledonia, Haldimand county and Ontario. We come here offering perspective at a ground level. We are aware of the history of the great relationship between Six Nations and Caledonia and would prefer to see a speedy resolution that would allow the healing process to begin sooner rather than later. However, we do not believe that the current state of affairs is lending itself to that speedy resolution. We also feel that our participation in this consultation will only reinforce the message coming from Haldimand county.

So what are we hoping to achieve? We're hoping to attract assistance for existing businesses and assistance in attracting new business. Local businesses need assistance in developing a new client base to replace the business that was coming from Six Nations and is now lost. New businesses may need incentives to open in Caledonia. We're also hoping to get assistance for existing homeowners and incentives to attract new residents: mortgage incentives for those residents whose property values have dropped below what is left owing on their mortgages and incentives to attract new residents to replace those residents who are frustrated and looking to leave the area.

We're looking for assistance to repair and develop infrastructure for areas affected during the standoff. Municipal infrastructure is one of the areas affected by provincial downloading, and this will require additional funding to make the roads safe. This will take away from other badly needed infrastructure upgrades throughout the county.

We're also looking for additional assistance in social service funding to cover additional costs incurred due to the occupation: more funding to cover employment loss and counselling, stress management, financial management and, critically, sport and recreation funding to make up for sponsorship fund losses from local businesses that have either closed or have no funds available.

Finally, the most important part is expeditious resolution to the duty-to-consult issue along the Haldimand Tract. This is the most critical issue facing Caledonia, Haldimand county and all of southern Ontario over the long term. This is a critical element in making any assistance sustainable. Without sustainable assistance, Caledonia and Haldimand county's population will stagnate and eventually fall into a decline. This is a critical factor in the development of all communities along the Grand River and communities outside of the Haldimand Tract that may have to prepare to take on some of

the growth planned for this area. When combined with greenbelt legislation and the mid-Niagara highway corridor, it really doesn't leave a lot of room for development in the Golden Horseshoe. Development will have to extend down the 401 corridor, and communities need to be prepared.

Which brings us to why we believe this is necessary: Businesses will continue to suffer, families will continue to live under stressful conditions and the community, poised to be one of the success stories of the greenbelt plan, will suddenly stop growing and possibly decline. On a larger scale, the duty-to-consult issue has far-reaching implications which will have a large impact on a lot of communities in southern Ontario. This could have a tremendous negative effect on all tax bases in all municipalities along the Grand River and will possibly force all municipalities to revise official development plans.

We appreciate the fact that both levels of government are trying to resolve all current outstanding and valid land claims and agree that it will take time for this to happen. However, we feel that if the province does not show any commitment to keeping Caledonia a vibrant, evolving community, we are afraid the effects of the situation in Caledonia will travel up and down the Haldimand Tract like a virus and Ontario will no longer be a preferred destination for new economic development. We feel that the provincial government has a great opportunity here to set the benchmark when it comes to assisting communities through situations like land claims and we hope our presentation today helps communities involved in future land claims. Caledonia is growing weary in the role as collateral damage.

In closing, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to present today. I appreciate the time that you've taken to listen to our presentation. We will have written submissions available at a later date. Now I would like to take any questions.

The Chair: And if you do provide those written submissions, if you give them to the clerk, he'll ensure that everybody on the committee gets a copy.

Mr. Stoneman: Thank you very much.

The Chair: The questioning goes to the official opposition. Mr. Barrett.

Mr. Barrett: Thank you, Frank and Ron, for coming up to Barrie. Towards the end of your presentation you made reference to this land claim. We do know that in the fall the federal negotiators indicated that there was no land claim; there was kind of a counter-argument. The federal justice just brought down their advice to the Six Nations Community that there is no land claim; it would not hold up in court. So we have the federal government indicating there's no claim on the occupied site in the subdivision, but we have the remaining situation where the provincial government—we know Ontario appealed Justice Marshall's ruling and, through that appeal, provincially the occupation is considered legal. How do we square that? Is there a need for change now on the provincial side, given the indication from the federal govern-

ment that there is no land claim? Fifty chiefs signed off on this.

Mr. Stoneman: It's very frustrating to have one level of government say that this isn't an issue and another level of government pointing the finger back at the previous level of government to say that it is an issue. We're not trying to concern ourselves with the land claim situation itself. We are here today to inform the government that if they continue on with their policy as they have, our community is going to need some help. We have graciously accepted help from the current government already, but that is going to be a token compared to what we will need to continue on.

Mr. Barrett: Again, it's another example of Canadian land claims being far beyond the purview of people living in that subdivision or business people in town to try and resolve these kinds of issues. There is an awful lot of knowledge locally. As you've indicated, all sides have lived and worked and played together and intermarried for several hundred years. The wisdom is there on Six Nations—the largest community in Canada. I'm MPP for Six Nations as well. The wisdom is there and I think there is an opportunity here to resolve centuries of having a burr under the saddle as far as land claims.

You mentioned the provincial highway closed, Argyle Street closed, the railway closed for about a month, the impact beyond Caledonia and the three adjacent counties and the Nanticoke Industrial Park. I'm concerned. We know the hit—I think you gave us a figure. I've heard, just at Stelco, Esso and OPG alone, something like \$150 million when you have to convert to ships from rail for your product. I am concerned about the future there as well. Does this deep-six any opportunity for new industrial development as far as just-in-time delivery or shipping, say, nuclear equipment on that railroad next to the Six Nations? Is Nanticoke done as far as the future development of the thousands of acres down there?

Mr. Stoneman: It is our position that we hope not. However, we also realize that just like Caledonia, all of Haldimand county is going to need assistance to get through this. The security of the rail line is a day-by-day thing. We had a meeting on Tuesday. The staff sergeant from the OPP indicated that on Monday night the barricades almost went back up, due to some angst between the Caledonia residents and the protesters. We've learned from history; we just don't want to repeat it again.

1400

Mr. Barrett: Yes. We do shoot ourselves in the foot, so often the focus is right in Caledonia at the barricades, the tension and the arguments that occur. And the media comes into town, which is counterproductive is some sense; oftentimes, it's not good for business. I know the decline in sales of some people that I know. I guess the question is, where do we go from here, and should we be taking this beyond Caledonia? Should we be going beyond just having these demonstrations right in town?

Mr. Stoneman: I think it would be irresponsible for the province to localize this issue. You have to realize that Caledonia only has about 5,000 voters, in a riding

where the usual turnout is around 50,000, so from a political perspective there's not a big voice there. However, as I said, we feel it would be irresponsible for the government to ignore the situation because, as you saw the Haldimand Tract map up there, this could travel right up and down: Brantford, Kitchener-Waterloo, Dunnville. It's imperative that the province sets the benchmark for assisting these communities, because it's not going to stop here in Caledonia; it is going to spread.

Mr. Barrett: Thank you, Frank.

The Chair: Thank you for your submission.

MERCK FROSST CANADA LTD.

The Chair: I call on Merck Frosst Canada Ltd. to come forward, please.

Good afternoon. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There could be five minutes of questioning. I ask you to identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Ms. Kathy Armstrong: Sure. My name is Kathy Armstrong. With me is Peter Fields. We're here representing Merck Frosst, one of Canada's leading research-based pharmaceutical companies. We've provided advice in the past in other forums such as this about what our company and other innovative pharmaceutical companies believe the government can do to foster economic growth and job creation in the province, things like an innovation lens through which all government policy should be viewed in order to support an innovation agenda. While these recommendations remain important, today I'm going to focus on something different, something that we consider to be an important public health priority, and that's vaccines.

The government has three key priorities with respect to health care: keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses. Immunization programs help to address all three priorities. The World Bank has stated that immunization should be first among the public health initiatives in which governments around the world invest. "Vaccination programs are considered to be the most cost-beneficial health intervention and one of the few that systematically demonstrate far more benefits than costs."

In the past, Ontario has demonstrated a leadership role when it comes to vaccines. In early 2004, the government announced funding for chickenpox, meningitis and pneumococcal meningitis vaccines for children. Today, we are fortunate to have new vaccines that address unmet medical needs helping to prevent serious illnesses such as cervical cancer and rotavirus and reduce pressure on hospitals and other health care resources. Once again, Ontario has a chance to show leadership on this very important issue.

Cervical cancer is the second-most common cancer in women aged 20 to 44, behind breast cancer. Virtually all cases of cervical cancer are caused by the human papillomavirus, or HPV. Across Canada, 1,400 women are diagnosed and 400 die every year from this devas-

tating disease; that's more than one woman every day. Seventy-five per cent of sexually active Canadians will have at least one HPV infection in their lifetime.

In July of this year, Health Canada approved the first vaccine specifically designed to prevent cervical cancer. After more than 18 years in development and in clinical trials involving more than 27,000 patients, Gardasil demonstrated 100% efficacy against the four strains of HPV targeted by the vaccine. This means that instead of reacting to cancer once it has been diagnosed, we are now able to prevent most cases of the cancers caused by HPV from happening in the first place.

Support for immunization programs like this are building around the world. Beginning this year, all females aged 12 to 26 in Australia will have their Gardasil vaccination paid for by the national immunization program. In the United States, eligible females aged 11 and 12 have their vaccines paid for by the federal government through the vaccines for children fund. The European Commission has licensed Gardasil for use in children aged 9 to 15 and women aged 16 to 26.

Shortly after Gardasil received Health Canada's approval, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, the Society of Gynecologic Oncologists of Canada and the Society of Canadian Colposcopists issued a joint statement welcoming the latest breakthrough in the fight to prevent cervical and other anogenital cancers caused by the human papillomavirus. They commended Health Canada for moving quickly to make this vaccine available to Canadian women.

Earlier this week, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, or NACI, recommended Gardasil for females between nine and 13 years of age, as this is before the onset of sexual intercourse for most females in Canada and the efficacy would be greatest; females between the ages of 14 and 26 years, even if they are already sexually active, as they may not yet have HPV infection and are very unlikely to have been infected with all four HPV types in the vaccine; and females between the ages of 14 and 26 years who have had previous pap abnormalities, including cervical cancer, or have had genital warts or known HPV infection.

NACI is a national committee of recognized experts in the fields of paediatrics, infectious diseases, immunology, medical microbiology, internal medicine and public health. The committee reports to the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada and works with staff of the Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control of the Public Health Agency of Canada to provide ongoing and timely medical, scientific and public health advice. NACI makes recommendations for the use of vaccines currently or newly approved for use in humans in Canada, including the identification of groups at risk for vaccine-preventable disease for whom vaccine programs should be targeted. NACI also advises on the need for national vaccination strategies and makes recommendations for vaccine development research.

Given the support of this advisory committee and other stakeholders who work in the treatment of this dis-

ease, we would recommend implementation of an HPV immunization program in Ontario for grade 7 females starting this September. Students in this age cohort already receive a vaccine for hepatitis B, and the vaccine could be administered at the same time to reduce administrative costs and facilitate broad immunization. The cost to implement such a program would be approximately \$32 million.

In addition to the approval of Gardasil last year, Health Canada also approved an important oral vaccine for the prevention of rotavirus gastroenteritis, which is a potentially serious and unpredictable disease in children. Rotavirus causes severe diarrhea, vomiting and high fever, usually in infants and children aged six to 36 months. In Canada, the US and Europe, it is one of the leading causes of childhood hospitalization.

Virtually every Canadian child under the age of five will be infected with rotavirus at least once. While it's rarely fatal in this country, it is estimated to be responsible for up to 7,000 hospitalizations, 27,000 emergency room visits, 56,000 physician visits and can account for 78% of gastroenteritis hospitalizations during peak months. The impact of rotavirus is significant not only for the health care system, but it also has a huge societal impact, estimated to be \$46 million annually. For every rotavirus case, parents miss an average of 1.6 days of work to care of their child. For hospitalized cases, 67% of families lost work for a median of five days. The vaccine would be given to infants at two, four and six months, and the cost to implement an Ontario program would be approximately \$21 million.

In 2004, the federal government announced funding for a national immunization strategy. It provided \$300 million over three years to provinces to fund the new vaccines at the time: chicken pox, meningitis, pneumococcal meningitis and whooping cough. The main goals of the NIS were to provide high, achievable and measurable coverage of publicly funded immunization programs for all Canadians; provide complete coverage of all children with routine childhood vaccines recommended by the Canadian Immunization Committee; and ensure equitable access to these routinely recommended vaccines among jurisdictions and in special populations while considering jurisdictional program implementation differences.

At the time, Ontario played a leadership role in convincing the federal government of the merits of a national program, and it is critical that you play the same role again to prevent a patchwork of provincial programs. This program funding is set to expire in March 2007, and Ontario needs to take a proactive role in letting the federal government know that not only should it be continued, it should be expanded to assist the provinces in paying for these important new vaccines.

In the meantime, while this may be one option to help implement a program, we believe that it is imperative that Ontario move forward with or without federal support and announce a program that could begin this September. A \$50-million investment will help to meet

the government's priorities of keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses, while at the same time ensuring that young women and infants are not needlessly afflicted with cervical cancer or rotavirus gastroenteritis, diseases that can now be prevented.

The Chair: Thank you. This round of questioning goes to the NDP.

Mr. Prue: You've made a fairly compelling case here. Is the cost of doing this the cost of the vaccine?

1410

Ms. Armstrong: Yes.

Mr. Prue: That's just the cost of the vaccine. So we would also have to pay for, I guess, doctors or nurses or other people to administer the vaccine.

Ms. Armstrong: We would recommend that, for Gardasil, it would be done through the school programs. Though the administration costs are essentially all there, it might require one additional visit. Gardasil is given in three doses, where hepatitis B is two doses. So it would require an additional visit by the nurses who give it in the schools now.

For rotavirus, it would be given at the same time. Children already go to the doctor's for well-baby visits at two, four and six months of age, and they get immunized for other ones at that time, so we would recommend that it be done in conjunction with those. Again, the cost would be reduced. It wouldn't be an additional visit to the physician. They already go.

Mr. Prue: Is the medicine ingested or through a needle?

Ms. Armstrong: For Gardasil it's a needle in the thigh. For rotavirus, it's actually an oral vaccine, so it's like a syringe that's popped into the mouth of infants.

Mr. Prue: Just pop; in it goes. I think those are the only questions I would have. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for your submission.

ONTARIO SCHOOL BUS ASSOCIATION

The Chair: I would ask the Ontario School Bus Association to come forward, please. Good afternoon.

Mr. Stan Sinton: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for hearing us. My name is Stan Sinton. I'm the president of the Ontario School Bus Association. With me is John Sharp, vice-president of the Ontario School Bus Association. We represent approximately 1,450 drivers, about 1,000 mechanics—just under 20,000 employees from 175 different school bus companies. Some 60% of our membership is small, family-owned businesses having 20 or fewer of those employees. So we're very much a small, family-based business.

We value ourselves as an educational partner. We've been partners in education since 1969, when we were created. Our businesses support not only education, but with our tax dollars we support hospitals and charities.

As an association, we are very concerned about student transportation throughout Ontario. We are hoping

that the reforms that are now under way in good faith will come through the financial challenges and address a resolution of some of the outstanding issues that we're facing.

A short-term challenge that has real impacts on our viability is mostly providing a fair and equitable student transportation formula. This should be a government priority.

Parents, through an Environics poll that we hosted five years ago, said clearly at the time that they value home-to-school transportation to get their children in the classroom, as did educators, realizing the fact that without school bus transportation, students would not be in the classroom.

Our operators have been working exceptionally hard to provide great service, but under the current funding there is a risk to the essential service that is being provided. The problems that we're facing in this current year can be addressed through what's going on right now at the MOE. But for the future, for the crunch that we're facing now, the retention of our drivers and the training, we're competing with the transit market that is paying our drivers, on average, \$21 an hour. School bus operators throughout Ontario on average are paying \$12. With the \$8 minimum wage that became law this morning, that will put an even greater influx on us.

Fuel has risen, although right now you're going to tell me that it's going down. But since 2002, in our industry we have faced a 56% increase. Our parts, maintenance, benefits, insurance, taxes and utilities have risen far faster than CPI. Our capital has also risen, and the new emission standards that we're facing will rise even further. The government isn't just starting to research these to come up with a permanent fix; the problem is, as I said before, that they are not going to come through in time, so we need some bridging.

Funding challenge number one: As advocates for the review of a true costing, we are pleased that the government is conducting a costing so that we know the true cost of operating school buses will not only be there once and for all for a fact, but that it will prove our case studies. Although this costing study is underway, companies throughout Ontario have increased hardships due to the facts that I've already mentioned. Our concern about the result of this study is that decisions will not be made until the spring of 2007.

For operators, the only questions are, what will we do in the interim? How will we survive? How do we make sure that students still get to their classrooms? Driver wages have to be addressed. Their retention has to be addressed. Children need to have the safety of seeing the same driver day in and day out, not a driver for a week, while they go to transit a week later.

Additional costs, such as fuel, benefits, insurance, taxes and utilities that have been skyrocketing, also need to be addressed. New capital requirements flowing from the government regulations need to be addressed in the interim. Although in past grant regs we've experienced a mild increase—for example, last year after the budget

submissions we experienced an increase of 2%—as you'll see in a later table, the increase that we've faced as an industry was greater than the 2%, so we're actually losing.

Funding challenge number 1: Costs are rising and a permanent fix is not likely. The proposal that we have is to have a bridging solution to ensure that the operators can survive until the E&E and the costing processes are through. Funding adjustments in line with the transportation index makes the most sense, considering that is what we do, although we do value ourselves higher than somebody who hauls Coke: We haul our future. We are requesting a 4.1% increase in the funding for this year to bring us into line with the transportation index. You'll note that in 2005, the index reads 3%, but as I said before, we only received 2%, a hardship from last year.

Since 2002, in the index that is in our submission, you will see that it has been 5.4, 2.8, 1.6, 3.0 and 4.1. We, as an industry, since 1996 have never been in line with the increases that the index has set.

Funding challenge number 2 is the hand-down for the emissions, as I would like to call it. The school bus industry has experienced increasing regulatory requirements. Federal regulations for road transportation emissions began in 1971, with additional challenges in 2002. There are more for 2007 and then again more for 2010. These new regulations require new engines, increasing the cost of a 72-passenger school bus to go up approximately 20%, so in rough numbers, that's anywhere from \$7,000 to \$10,000 per bus. When you look at a fleet throughout Ontario of over 14,000 buses, you're talking a large amount of money.

All industry experts in the field also know that with this new technology, which is not familiar to the terrain that we have throughout Ontario—with snow, roads, hills—and has been tested in California or on speedways, predict that there will also be an increase in maintaining these vehicles. The OSBA's position is to support the efforts to reduce the emissions, but we need to consider the financial impact to our members. It remains our goal to work with all industries, no matter what the cost is to us, as long as the cost can be addressed.

Our proposal for this is an environmental rebate of \$7,500 on the purchase of all new 2007 standard buses, with a three-year implementation time frame that would allow you to purchase any bus as long as it has the CSA D250 manufacturing standards and the 2007 emission engine. The rebate would cost approximately \$12 million to the government. The two key benefits that we see: We will be reducing greenhouse gas emissions faster than transit and we will bring on-stream sooner than possible a fleet of buses that have higher safety standards. That's where the D250 comes in.

We urge the government to help bridge the funding to address the immediate cost pressures of the 4.1%, which would cure driver wages, retention of drivers, drivers going over to transit, help with the fuel, benefits, insurance, taxes that have all been skyrocketing and also, to use the green term, an environmental rebate of up to \$7,500 to increase these.

As you look through a small community, if I can use Barrie, since we're hosted here, Barrie is in a unique area where we're growing at an exponential rate. School buses are being added, whereas in some places they're being taken off the road. John also has a company in unique spots also like this throughout Ontario. The problem that we're facing is, the equipment capital costs are going up, drivers' wages aren't going up, we can't compete with transit or even Home Depot or, with minimum wage going up, anybody else. So sooner or later, unless we adjust it to get us through all the new models, to get the new financing through, people in the city of Barrie, for example, will have difficulty getting their kids to school eventually unless we do something about it.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you. We really should move now to questions. Mr. Delaney.

Mr. Delaney: By the way, that was a very interesting, thoughtful brief, and I want to thank you very much for the time that you took to prepare it.

I'd like to address one part of it. You mentioned, of course, like most people who are in the transportation business, the degree to which you're grappling with the fluctuating cost of fuel. If, hypothetically, part of the funding that addressed the fuel component of busing were in two parts, which would go like this: a base fuel allowance regardless of the price of the fuel and a variable component, which would be reviewed quarterly or perhaps semi-annually that would fluctuate with changing fuel prices—going up when fuel prices are high and, based on a blended average, coming down when fuel costs come down—how would you react to such a proposal?

1420

Mr. Sinton: I would respond very happily, very supportively. You'd probably get the support of the whole industry. The only thing that we'd want to make sure of, and it's a problem that I should have mentioned in my submission but I didn't, is that when the adjustments come through, whether it be up or down, that the adjustments flow through to the operator and don't get stuck somewhere else in bureaucracy. But it's a great idea, and I do like the idea.

Mr. Delaney: That's a fair comment. Just one last one: Where you serve coterminous boards—for example, you have the overlapping Catholic and public board—in many cases, but not all, they collaborate in busing. Can you just enlighten me and tell me the degree to which on a bus route you will pick up both students of the public system and the Catholic system?

Mr. Sinton: It varies throughout the province. Right now what's going on is that the MOE is putting in, I don't even know what they call it, a strangle so that they're forcing the boards to work together no matter their religion so that they're riding either one bus or the bus routing is done in such a way that one bus can service two schools. So it's not necessarily one bus/one road, because that doesn't necessarily work due to geography. But if it gets expanded beyond the geography,

more and more boards throughout the province, thanks to the MOE, are putting not just the same school or religion on one bus, but they are using the bus to serve both religions and cutting down costs.

Mr. Delaney: Thanks.

The Chair: Ms. Mitchell.

Mrs. Mitchell: Just to expand further on that, gentlemen: We have had numerous presentations by both school boards and they have expressed some concerns with the wording of the language coming down. The MOE—you mean the Ministry of Education?

Mr. Sinton: I do. I get that confused. MEdu; sorry.

Mrs. Mitchell: It doesn't matter; just as long as we're both talking about the same thing. Have you experienced any difficulties with it as well?

Mr. Sinton: No, we haven't. Actually, we came from a spot where we were having a great amount of difficulty, not just with dialogue but with language getting handed down and being put out by the process. Under Nancy Naylor they've decided that we actually know something about school busing and that we should be involved. I don't mind the language they're using, nor do the members. We just want to make sure that what they start they have to finish now, because some of the spots—as whoever is representing Hamilton could tell you, they hit a wall already with their coterminous boards.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Do I have any time left, Chair?

The Chair: About a minute.

Mrs. Mitchell: My other question is: There has been a series of concerns raised in my office—I'm the member for Huron—Bruce. We have a lot of buses. With regard to logs and that type of thing, do you have any comments you want to make to that generally?

Mr. Sinton: Hours of service logs: The official position of the OSBA is the fact that we're here to ensure that the students get to school safely. If monitoring their logs makes them operate safer, then that's great, but what does need to be realized is the fact that, if there's a cost that needs to be paid to a driver to take care of a log, because it's time out of the day, then they need to be paid for that time.

Mrs. Mitchell: So do you see part of that concern being addressed in the overall formula?

Mr. Sinton: Hopefully. That's a hope. It's a wish; it's not an ask.

Mrs. Mitchell: It is part of the process, though?

Mr. Sinton: Correct.

Mrs. Mitchell: Okay. Thank you, gentlemen.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

RESIDENTIAL AND CIVIL CONSTRUCTION ALLIANCE OF ONTARIO

The Chair: I call on the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario to come forward, please.

You have 10 minutes for your presentation, and there could be five minutes of questioning. I ask you to

identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Mr. Andy Manahan: Thank you very much. Good afternoon, Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to make a presentation on the pre-budget. My name is Andy Manahan. I'm the executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario, and with me is Mr. Phil Rubinoff; he's the chairman of RCCAO.

RCCAO is a relatively new organization which brings together labour and management representatives across the residential and civil construction sectors. Although the group was only formed in late 2005, I just want to stress that many of our member associations have been in existence for many decades. The list of contractor associations includes, for example, the Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association, the Heavy Construction Association of Toronto, the Toronto and Area Road Builders Association, and others that are involved with residential housing such as the Metropolitan Toronto Apartment Builders Association and low-rise forming contractors. We do have two union members, LIUNA Local 183 and the carpenters' union, and we're hoping to expand that base as well.

We're very pleased to be here in Barrie today as this region represents an important segment of the construction work that is carried out by our member firms. The residential housing sector and numerous other infrastructure projects such as roads, sewers, water mains and bridges are a tremendous generator of employment to our industry as well as related sectors. As well, there is a growing segment of the construction workforce that lives in the Barrie and Simcoe area, so there is a vested interest and pride in ensuring that infrastructure investment is made within their local community.

Collectively, RCCAO aims to facilitate dialogue and ensure that the voice of the construction industry is clearly heard and understood by key decision-makers. We're hoping to work with all levels of government on the issues that we view as being priority. Certainly, we want to see strategic infrastructure investment, and we would like to seek ways to fast-track priority projects.

In that regard, our association released last summer a report that I think was distributed to all MPPs entitled *The Infrastructure Funding Deficit: Time to Act*. That concluded that alternate financing arrangements are appropriate for certain types of infrastructure. We believe, further to that, that public pension fund holders such as OMERS and teachers' funds should be investing in Ontario and in Canada rather than in other countries around the world so we're getting some return on our own investment.

Attached to the presentation—you'll see that just before mid-December there was an article in the *Toronto Star* about public-private partnerships or alternate financing and procurement. I guess the impression was left by the writer that unions are universally opposed to that private finance model. The letter that I wrote essentially said there are many private sector unions that are in fact

coming to the realization that new, innovative financing models are the way to go, because governments certainly don't have enough money to fund the entire infrastructure deficit.

I'll get right on to our second report, which is fairly hot off the press. I know Mr. McNeely was in a meeting that we had three weeks ago with the Minister of Transportation, which I thought was very successful. The report was done by a team of consultants led by Dr. Richard Soberman and entitled *Transportation Challenges in the Greater Toronto Area*. Certainly, although it focused on the GTA, I think it was really looking at the greater Golden Horseshoe, because a lot of the population and employment forecasts were taken from the *Places to Grow* document that was released by the province. Essentially, what Dr. Soberman and his team have been looking at, and we did not influence the recommendations in any way, is that an effective governance structure is a prerequisite to the development of a comprehensive transportation plan, and that further, predictable, long-term funding streams are important to ensure that continuous improvements can be made to public transit. The executive summary of the report is appended.

During the past two months, we have met with a number of individuals, including the new chair of the GTTA, Rob MacIsaac, key cabinet ministers and many other senior provincial staff to discuss the recommendations. To date, we have received very positive feedback from everyone we have spoken to.

We recognize the enormous costs of gridlock, and we know it's top of mind for many residents and businesses nowadays. We do support the efforts of the GTTA to develop a plan and garner long-term funding. A clear direction in the upcoming budget concerning funding and the ability of the GTTA to implement the necessary financing tools are necessary for that organization to gain the leverage that is needed to move forward.

RCCAO agrees with the convincing arguments in the report that we had commissioned for a new governance model and a comprehensive long-term, sustainable transportation plan to support the growth plan. The GTTA can play a meaningful role only if it controls the allocation of a substantial portion of both provincial and federal funding for GTA transportation.

Since we are in Barrie, it is worthwhile to comment on the GTA commuter behaviour study that was just released yesterday on local Barrie area residents who are long-distance commuters along the Highway 400 corridor. The study sponsors are hoping to ease congestion through the promotion of telecommuting from a community or home office. We certainly support those transportation demand-management types of solutions. Everyone, even the previous presenters, talked about the changes in gas prices and how that affects their business—certainly that affects commuters, and it's a regular topic of conversation for many—but it was found in the study that the majority of respondents actually underestimated their travel costs by half. I guess they weren't including insurance and the like.

1430

Anecdotally, there was someone I knew when I worked many years ago in the 1990s in the North York area. This person commuted from the Simcoe area, but after a while the grind became too much, and they took early retirement because of the two to three to four hours per day that sometimes occurs in the winter when you're doing that commute both ways.

I understand that GO will be offering service from Barrie to Union Station later this year. Again, this is the type of alternative that will allow car-dependent commuters, many of them in single-occupancy vehicles, to make a realistic change in travel mode. Indeed, in the future a rail corridor, perhaps along Highway 400, could help ease some of the gridlock issues, and you could place stations at some of the major interchanges with commuter parking facilities—like we have right now, but with that multi-modal opportunity.

The report by Dr. Soberman promotes the merit of conducting a thorough assessment of transportation needs and priorities, especially since funding for regional requirements is always going to be limited. The report recommends that this assessment include both road expansion and transit-based projects. I want to emphasize that, because there are many, certainly Toronto-area, studies that say that you can't use the car anymore and we should focus entirely on transit. While transit is certainly a worthy option, there's a vast majority of people living in the suburbs who cannot realistically use transit in the state it's in right now.

I'll just skip ahead a little bit. We're in favour of long-term planning horizons of 30 years-plus. There are many examples that Dr. Soberman has provided where short-term electoral cycles tend to get in the way of the longer-term planning. For example, in the 1990s, as many of you know, both the Sheppard and the Eglinton subways were started at the same time. The Eglinton was subsequently stopped, at a cost of, up to that point, about \$80 million. So we need, again, to think more strategically and long term, and perhaps even on a contractual basis. Once a plan is there, it has to be amended only if there is a war or something that's quite dramatic.

I wanted to point out, with respect to the federal-provincial relationship, that appended to your brief there is a letter from the former Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, about five years ago, saying that he would like to encourage the federal government to invest in Ontario urban transportation infrastructure. We think that the current federal minister will appreciate the compelling arguments made by Ontario's finance minister, Greg Sorbara, therefore. The Honourable Jim Flaherty addressed the Toronto Board of Trade on Monday night—I was there in fact—and he was speaking about Toronto's role as an economic engine for the country. RCCAO certainly hopes that this positive signal will translate into meaningful federal budgetary measures. Again, it's an example that we've got to have better coordination between federal and provincial folks.

Transportation planning merit must prevail in the determination of priorities. In our various meetings, Dr.

Soberman has provided numerous examples, as I mentioned. In addition to that, we have to think about the environmental imperative nowadays, because it is certainly a top opinion poll issue right now. The GTA commuter behaviour study that I just mentioned said that "the majority of respondents are concerned about their contribution to greenhouse gases and over a third are taking concrete steps to reduce the impact of commuting on the environment through various alternatives to the daily commute, such as carpooling, using public transportation or telecommuting."

To ensure that vital transportation projects are built on time and cost-effectively, a more streamlined environmental assessment process is mandatory. We understand that steps are being taken to address the EA process on a sectoral basis, and we are encouraged by this.

I'll have a sip of water.

The Chair: You have about a minute left.

Mr. Manahan: Okay. I think the remainder of it is essentially a summation of a recent report by the C.D. Howe Institute done by Dr. Harry Kitchen that talks about full-cost accounting of water and sewer infrastructure. At the municipal level, we would like to see that happen on a wider basis. Certainly, Harry Swain's report from the summer of 2005, the water strategy expert panel, talked about some of the overbuilding that was done because of a lack of full-cost accounting. In the industry's view, and certainly the Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association asked me to relay the message, we've been waiting over four years now for the regulations to accompany the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act. I think this is critical if we're going to promote proper tracking and billing and, certainly, conservation and environmental protection. RCCAO will be studying this in the future and will have more to say on it.

The bottom line is, we're recommending that the Minister of Finance commit to a long-term funding program in the 2007 budget that will enable implementation of a regionally integrated, multi-modal transportation plan through the GTTA and the Ministry of Transportation etc.

The Chair: Thank you. This round of questioning goes to the official opposition.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Andy, it's great to see you again. This panel has always benefited from your advice, so congratulations on your new position and this exciting new grouping. Mr. Rubinoff, thank you very much for being here, and congratulations on the success.

My first point: I do like the RCCAO's logo. It's very snappy. Did you do that, Andy?

Mr. Manahan: No, I didn't. It was a committee, if you can believe it—the shovel representing labour and the pencil representing management.

Mr. Hudak: Yes. Well, congratulations on bringing forward this grouping. We look forward to your ongoing advice. It's a very powerful amalgamation of groups with some outstanding advice, as we can see in your report and in previous work.

To the questions: P3s. You have a good article here from the Star: “P3 arrangements were criticized by the Liberals when they were in opposition. But now that they are in government, the Liberals say such deals are the best way to get new infrastructure built in Ontario....” So it’s quite a change from the election.

When it comes to P3s, do you have any advice in terms of things that should not be done through P3s—highways, water and sewer projects, schools, hospitals—or are P3s appropriate for all those types of infrastructure?

Mr. Manahan: It depends on the type of framework—and certainly Phil can jump in at any time. I know there’s been a clear direction from the government with respect to hospitals, that the public sector retain ownership, and I think that’s appropriate. You can do design-build-type mechanisms under the P3 framework, a situation where contractors build the facility. The government and the public benefit because they get the best price possible, and the public sector continues to operate and staff the building.

Mr. Hudak: You make some excellent points about the GTTA. Really, you’re basically saying that it needs a bit more teeth and authority to make decisions, as well some concern about the governance structure. Should there be politicians on the GTTA or should they be arm’s length from direct election? Should they make the final decision on transportation projects?

Mr. Manahan: Again, Phil can jump in, but it was Dr. Soberman’s advice, based on his extensive history of watching these things unfold, that non-elected officials with expertise in areas like transportation, finance and partnership approaches would be preferable. I don’t think he was trying to rule out all politicians, and I don’t think we’re saying that, but that would be the way to go.

Mr. Phil Rubinoff: He was recommending a mix rather than politicians always.

Mr. Hudak: And again, in your advice, the GTTA making the final decision as opposed to recommending projects would be the most effective way.

Mr. Rubinoff: Correct.

Mr. Hudak: You mentioned also the importance of streamlining the EA process to make sure projects can be done on a timely basis. Any specifics that you would recommend in that realm?

Mr. Manahan: The classic example everyone’s been using the last couple of years is the St. Clair streetcar because that was an existing project. I don’t think you have to go back to square one to determine what the various options are. Basically, you’re replacing a streetcar with, ostensibly, a right of way. I think the public could have been consulted on some design elements, but you didn’t need to do a full-blown EA on that one.

In terms of transportation projects, we think that the global good—it is better for the environment. You’re taking more cars off the road, and those cars that are on the road are going to be kept moving so that you’re not emitting as much greenhouse gas. Certainly, one of the sectors where we should be able to streamline it dramatically would be transportation.

Mr. Hudak: I appreciate your points too on the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act. It passed four years ago, but regulations have still not come forward. I certainly support the point you’ve made, that they should have. It should have happened yesterday.

You talked about the importance of a user-pay system to encourage conservation of resources. Do you see that type of user-pay system in areas aside from water and sewer usage?

Mr. Manahan: The biggest one would be for road pricing—toll roads. Despite some of the politics around the 407, it’s obviously being used by many commuters and trucks for goods movement, and I think it’s proven successful because of the high usage. So I think for future projects of that nature, we should seriously look at tolls.

Mr. Hudak: Is there still time, Chair?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you. That’s great—a lot of good responses to the questions. I appreciate that.

The other area would be with respect to transit and making sure that we have a greater investment in transit. We’ve had some frustrations with the wildcat strike that occurred in the TTC. We have the threat of a strike for GO commuter service pending next week; we hope that doesn’t happen. Any advice in terms of—should there be more competition in this realm or how do we ensure predictable service and expanded service for transit?

1440

Mr. Manahan: The one example in the GTA right now is Viva. It’s at an early stage, but in terms of the ability to go from zero miles per hour to 100 miles per hour, they’ve done phenomenal things in a very short time with bus rapid transit. Certainly I think even the TTC and other transit groups could learn something from them in terms of in the bus shelter, they provide a time—you know, the bus will be here in two minutes and 30 seconds. That’s the kind of information that commuters really need to use and it makes the system much more effective.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF TORONTO

The Chair: I call on the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto to come forward, please. Good afternoon, gentlemen. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There may be up to five minutes of questioning following that. I would ask you to identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Mr. Michael Fullan: Thank you very much. My name is Michael Fullan. I’m the executive director of Catholic Charities, and Jack Panozzo has joined us from Catholic Charities as well.

I am the executive director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto. We are comprised of 28 member agencies that reach over 227,000 people in Toronto, Dufferin, Durham, Peel, York and Simcoe counties, and the numbers are growing each year.

We draw our strength from the support of the Archdiocese of Toronto, the largest in Canada, with 1.7 million Catholics in 225 parishes. Their support for Catholic Charities has never wavered and, in fact, it is stronger than ever. We are the primary recipient of the annual ShareLife campaign in the archdiocese. Although our agencies are Catholic, we respond to all people in need throughout the archdiocese, whatever creed they may be.

Catholic Charities knows the positive effect our agencies have and how their programs' success contributes to the economic and social well-being of Ontario. While the province is to be commended for efforts to improve social services, we must address the lack of sufficient funding of administrative costs for agencies, affordable housing and assisted housing, and the national child benefit supplement clawback. Based on response in the archdiocese, we believe there is an expectation on the part of the public to take action in these areas and we would like to come forward here today to make three recommendations.

The first recommendation is that supplementary support be provided to social service agencies to allow for more comprehensive implementation of programs and to maintain consistent, effective levels of staffing, especially with regard to programs and services for seniors, families, women, developmentally disabled, those living with HIV and AIDS, and young parents.

A review of the base administrative funding needs for social service agencies must be initiated to ensure levels that will sustain the work to be done. Administrative funding for social service programs has not kept pace with the increase in those programs' administrative costs, even as the need for those programs continues to grow across the province.

There is an expectation on the part of our own constituency, the public and those in social services that we must take all the steps necessary to meet the continued and growing demand to provide services. It has become increasingly clear that unless base funding for administration of the programs already under way, and to be developed in the future, is significantly increased, then the level of response to people in need who rely on these services will erode. Insufficient funding is straining our agencies' response capacity, hampering their ability to hire qualified personnel, causing staff burnout and cutbacks to service.

Our second recommendation is that funds already allotted from the federal government be used to provide affordable housing for low-income families and singles, seniors, and people living with HIV and AIDS, and make available assisted housing for people living with mental illness, physical and developmental disabilities, and women and children who have been victims of domestic violence.

The inability of low-income families and singles to find decent, affordable housing prevents them from becoming full, active partners in society. While we consider the province's actions to resolve differences with the federal government over terms of the Canada-Ontario

agreement to be essential, we need to have the province continue toward building the thousands of new affordable units it has planned.

With a waiting list that now tops 122,000 people, it will take 10 years or more for people to get into affordable housing that they desperately need. While the housing figures may vary, the reality is that we cannot, must not, allow this situation to continue for thousands of people across the province who desperately need affordable housing. We need the Legislature to press the government to provide more affordable housing and not allow any further delays in the construction of such housing. We should respond as quickly here as we did to support health care.

Housing is crucial for low-income families, especially those with developmental disabilities. It means a safe haven and a decent place to raise their families. It ensures a sense of dignity and self-worth as a full participant in civil society.

Our third recommendation pertains to the practice of the national child benefit supplement deduction from general welfare payments of low-income parents. We feel that this adversely affects children, the most vulnerable in society. We must improve the conditions of children on social assistance by ending the deduction or clawback of the national child benefit supplement. A child living in a family that receives welfare needs more support, not less, and should be treated equally with a child from a poor, low-income family. We are aware that some of these clawed-back funds have been used to support a number of programs for children. We do not want to see them discontinued, no matter how the government decides to deal with this issue.

One solution among others proposed might be for the province to introduce a new child benefit plan that is integrated with the national child benefit supplement and one that ensures that no child, already suffering deprivation, should have to endure more.

We need the Ontario Legislature to move forward and help end the clawback or provide supplementary funding to redress a situation that unfairly impacts on poor, low-income children.

In conclusion, we should all be mindful of the counsel of the Catholic bishops of Ontario, who said that "governments must protect those who are marginalized in society. Through our governments, we must provide economic security and an acceptable quality of life for those who are unemployed, displaced, impoverished or afflicted by a mental or physical disability."

Thank you for your time and attention.

The Chair: Thank you for the submission. This round of questioning goes to Mr. Prue of the NDP.

Mr. Prue: Thank you for your thoughtful presentation here. You've only made three recommendations. Let's deal with each one.

In terms of social service agencies, how much of an increase do you think they need? I know it's required for their programs but it often occurs to me, and I think most people would admit, the salaries that are paid in the

social service agencies are often not enough to keep people around. They move from job to job seeking to better their lives, from \$15 to \$16 or whatever. It's not huge wages. How much do they need and how much of that money should go to better wages?

Mr. Fullan: That's a good question and it was difficult for us to come and ask for a supplement in that area. But you're right: If you look at the salaries of social workers in health or education, because they work in that field, you would see that these salaries are probably 30% to 40% below those. So I think if we could somehow approximate that to be able to keep people in this sector so they're not doing exactly what you said, moving around, that would be very helpful.

We get caught whenever we put new funds into this area. Typically, we're investing it into new services and not into the salary area, and that's always a dilemma because we see the increasing human need. You want to address that, but we can't continue to do that at the risk of ignoring the staff who support people.

I would also add that those who have the highest need who are being supported—I'm talking in this instance about people with significant developmental disabilities—those social service workers who care for them tend to get the lowest wages. So those with the greatest need get fewer resources and those serving them are paid the least as well. There seems to be a pecking order within the fields. I can't give you an exact number, but I think if we were to say a 30% increase, which we know is quite ambitious, that would start to bring us up to par with the other sectors.

Mr. Prue: The second one has to do with housing. I must say that I for one am very disappointed with this government's action on housing. They promised 35,000 housing units. To date they've built, that are actually occupied, 2,100—from 35,000 to 2,100. They promised money for assisted housing, and really, not a lot of it has been built. They promised money as a supplement so that people could move into already existing housing. That's only about one sixth implemented. Last but not least, they took \$390 million for housing from the federal government and put it in a bank account. Do you have any comment on that?

1450

Mr. Fullan: I can only tell you that our agencies do fantastic work with families and with individuals, but unless we can offer a family or an individual the kind of housing they need—a safe, secure roof over their heads—the rest of the work we do is not as effective as it could be. It's as simple as that. If you've got a child and a family that are moving around to four, five or six schools in a very short period of time, over a couple of years or whatever, you're not going to be as effective in securing that situation and having that child, that family, be able to thrive.

We know there are some roadblocks there, some impasses. Whatever it takes to move this along, we have to create housing. The numbers aren't getting any smaller. I think of even our child poverty numbers. We had an all-

party resolution at the federal level in 1990, I think—Ed Broadbent brought it forward—to eliminate child poverty in Canada. The realities are, the numbers haven't gone down significantly. They are still at the same level. and I think what often gets lost in that debate is that those children have now grown up and are poor adults. This is a whole generation of new children living in poverty that we have now in this country and in this province. That's something that should be of major concern to us all.

Mr. Prue: That's where I wanted to go with the last one. The government promised to abolish the clawback, and so far there have been a couple of little, tiny—I don't know; I wouldn't even call them diversions. I would just say that when the federal government increased it by 3%, they let them keep the 3%. They still take \$122 per month. Some groups have told us that if they could only do one thing to end poverty in Ontario, it should be ending the clawback. If they can only do one thing—if they can't increase ODSP or OW rates, if they can't give a livable minimum wage—is this the one item that, if they can only do one thing, they should do?

Mr. Fullan: I think it's an important one, yes. I think there's more than one item, but this is certainly a priority.

Mr. Prue: Oh, I think there are lots.

Mr. Fullan: But this is certainly a priority—and if you're doing this one thing, not clawing back on the other side and equalizing; make sure in fact that those children and those families do have that money and that you're not taking it back somewhere else.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

RESP DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

The Chair: I call on the RESP Dealers Association of Canada to come forward, please.

Mr. James Deeks: Good afternoon, everyone.

The Chair: Good afternoon. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There could be five minutes of questioning. I would ask you to identify yourselves for the purposes of Hansard.

Mr. Deeks: I'm Jim Deeks, executive director of the RESP Dealers Association.

Mr. Peter Lewis: My name is Peter Lewis. I'm the vice-chair of government relations for the RESP Dealers Association of Canada.

Mr. Deeks: Thank you for giving us the opportunity to continue to advocate government support for post-secondary students in Ontario. As I said, my name is Jim Deeks. I'm executive director of the RESP Dealers Association of Canada.

Our association represents roughly 50% of all the education savings plans currently active across Canada, and nearly all of the so-called "group" or "pool" plans in the country. More than a million Canadian young people are our clients, and we manage over \$6 billion on their behalf. Our association was formed in 2000, in part to self-regulate our industry, but also, and more importantly, as

a body which promotes post-secondary education and the ability for Canadians to pay for it.

As you may well know, RESPs have been available in Canada for over 45 years, but it wasn't until the introduction by the federal government in 1998 of the Canada education savings grant that this method of saving really took flight. The later edition, about three years ago, of the Canada learning bond for families of low and middle income has also assisted in the growth of education savings. Clearly, if governments support these plans—RESPs—with other programs, people respond.

There are many important facts in the first 15 pages of the deck that we're going to leave with you today, and I would urge you to review them at your leisure, but in the interest of time economy, I would like to introduce Peter Lewis, vice-president of the Canadian Scholarship Trust Foundation, one of our member firms, who will present our specific recommendations to you. Just before I introduce Peter, I'll let you know that he is the father of six children who have yet to go to university.

The Chair: Keep working.

Mr. Lewis: Thank you for your sympathy.

We actually believe that a well-educated workforce is essential if Ontario and indeed if Canada is going to remain competitive in a global economy. Ensuring access to a quality post-secondary education must be a key component of any strategy to foster economic growth and job creation in the province.

The question that we often ask is a fairly simple one: Who is it that's being left out of higher learning in this province? Being fairly frank, I do have six children, and I can tell you, it's not my children who are going to be left out of the system. The reason for that is because my eldest daughter, who will be heading off to university in less than three years, has always understood that there's an expectation that she's going to go. Her parents are university-educated. She has grown up in a stable, financially secure environment. For her—in fact, for all of my children—post-secondary education really isn't a dream; it's an expectation. It's something that they just understand is part of the natural course of their lives.

This is not the case for too many young Ontarians. They don't reach their full potential because they don't pursue higher learning. We know that these students often come from lower-income homes. We know that these students often come from homes where their parents have not benefited from higher learning. I believe personally that many of the decisions that these students make about whether or not they're going to go on to higher education, whether explicitly made or not, happen before the time that they are in grade 9. For those students, changing tuition policy or changing your financial student aid programs won't really have much of an impact.

I do believe in the importance of publicly funded post-secondary institutions, obviously. I also believe in the importance of strong student financial aid programs. But I also believe that government has a role to play in partnering with parents, encouraging them to foster a culture of learning within the home and in helping these families

plan and prepare for the time when their children will go on to post-secondary education. That's where we believe that registered education savings plans have an important role to play in public policy. But the simple fact that faces us today is that 63%—that's six out of 10—of Ontario children under the age of 18 don't have a savings program for their future post-secondary education.

Why is this important? We believe that having an RESP provides a couple of important benefits. First is the fact that every dollar that you set aside today is a dollar you're not going to have to find at some point down the road, when your child is ready to go to school. That's clear. However, we believe there's a second, less tangible but perhaps more important benefit, and that's this: motivation. Having a savings plan for a child's future education is a powerful communicator to that child about the value that her parents place on higher education and about the fact that her parents expect her to go on to trade school, college or university at some point in the future. That expectation increases the probability that she will in fact go on and fulfill that in her life.

We've seen, since 1961, education savings plans in Canada. From 1961 to 1997, we saw 700,000 children with roughly \$2.5 billion in total saved for education. With a single legislative change in 1998, the federal government introduced the Canada education savings grant, and the landscape changed. Today, close to \$20 billion has been set aside for roughly 2.2 million Canadian young people. As Jim has already stated, this is clear and compelling evidence that if you give families the right incentives, they're going to save for higher education. But we all understand that savings incentives have the greatest benefit for those who are most able to save. This is true for any savings vehicle. In 2004, the federal government, recognizing that, introduced the Canada Education Savings Act, in which they added a unique twist to the RESP, creating what's called the Canada learning bond and changing the matching grant programs to increase the matching rate for lower- and moderate-income families.

The question today, of course, is: What's the role of provincial governments on this front?

In his 2005 review of the post-secondary education system commissioned by the government of Ontario, the Honourable Bob Rae stated the following:

"The recent federal initiative on 'Learning Bonds,' which provides a direct yearly grant into RESP accounts for children in eligible lower-income families, is a progressive program. Ontario should provide an additional education savings incentive for those same low-income families. The recent decision by the Ontario government to exempt RESP accounts from asset consideration on applying for welfare was a positive one. If low-income families begin to open accounts for their children in response to these very strong incentives, it will help to encourage an expectation that their children will in fact go on to higher education."

1500

The government of Ontario has not responded to that recommendation. Simply put, we believe it's time for the

government to listen to the recommendation of Mr. Rae on this front: to follow the lead of other provinces such as Alberta and British Columbia and to join the partnership with parents by creating an Ontario learning bond.

Based on Mr. Rae's proposal, an Ontario learning bond would be a \$500 grant for low-income families in the year of the child's birth, followed by \$100 grants every year, as long as the family's income remains below a certain threshold. That's a total grant of \$2,000 over the life of the grant program. However, with a conservative 4% investment return, that would result in roughly \$3,300 available for that child when they're ready to go on to post-secondary education.

What would the required investment be in this program? Our estimates, assuming a 100% take-up rate, would be that it would cost roughly \$21 million in the first year, and then the cost would continue to grow. However, we also believe that your take-up rate would likely be lower than that, so your cost, we would anticipate, would also be lower.

There are significant benefits that come from this investment. First, what you have is that every family who would apply for and receive an Ontario learning bond would also get the federal Canada learning bond. That's an additional \$500, plus the \$100 grants. In other words, that \$3,300 value I talked about of the Ontario learning bond now becomes a \$6,600 value for the student when they're 18 and ready to go to post-secondary education.

Second, we know from our experiences that when families have a savings program in place, they are more likely to put in contributions of their own even if they are a low- or moderate-income family. Thus, the parents would be joining in this partnership with the government in preparing for their child's future education.

Third, any parental contributions would receive a matching grant from the federal government of up to 40%. The net result is that this student, from a lower-income family, will have at a minimum \$6,600 towards higher education and likely even more. It also means that more federal dollars that are earmarked for post-secondary education would have been transferred into the hands of Ontario families. That's a little bit more towards ensuring that Ontario gets its fair share of federal funds. Of course, the beauty of this program is that the federal government has already built an infrastructure to deliver it and has in fact invited any province that wishes to leverage that infrastructure to deliver a program of its own.

We believe, though, that the most important benefit of this type of initiative is this: Children growing up in these families will know that someone expects them to go to post-secondary education. The funds will be there to help, but they will have had the idea implanted in their mind from the time they're young that they can, and that they will, go on to higher education.

This is not an initiative about helping to ensure access for today's students. It's an investment in a long-term strategy that is designed to change the dialogue around the kitchen tables in Ontario, helping to create and

nurture a culture of learning in homes and helping to create the opportunity for every Ontario child to know that he or she has the chance to fulfill his or her potential and contribute fully to a strong and prosperous Ontario. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. Questioning will go to the government. Mr. Arthurs.

Mr. Arthurs: I have just a couple of questions. I know Mr. Delaney has one or two as well. The \$500 Ontario learning bond, is that proposed to be universal or income-restricted?

Mr. Lewis: Our specific proposal is that it would in fact be income-tested, that it would be matched with the federal program, which is tied to the national child benefit supplement eligibility.

Mr. Arthurs: And the proposal requires no parental contribution on the additional grant of \$100 per year.

Mr. Lewis: That's right. The Ontario learning bond would be structured as a grant without a matching component. However, our experience has been that once a savings account is opened, you'll often find families beginning to make contributions, whether it be gifts from grandparents or aunts and uncles, or they find ways to make room within their budget for small, modest contributions which would then attract up to a 40% matching grant from the government.

Mr. Arthurs: That's how they'd then take advantage of the federal grant provision.

Mr. Lewis: That's right.

Mr. Arthurs: You're saying that currently six out of 10 children in Canada have no plan.

Mr. Lewis: Canada has actually a slightly higher number than that. It's closer to seven out of 10.

Mr. Arthurs: And in Ontario?

Mr. Lewis: It's 63% of Ontario children.

Mr. Arthurs: You made reference to the RESP dealers, who manage close to \$6 billion in education savings for more than one million Canadian children. Did you reference the dollar value and the rough number of Ontario children, or did I miss that in the presentation?

Mr. Lewis: We didn't reference that here specifically.

Mr. Arthurs: Any sense of what that is?

Mr. Lewis: Typically it's between 40% and 45% of the total education savings pool.

Mr. Arthurs: Okay, so \$2.5 billion, \$2.8 billion and 450,000 children, probably.

Mr. Lewis: That's right. Now, that's referring only to members of our specific association. There are RESPs outside of our association. The global pool of RESP assets today is about \$20 billion, so Ontario would probably have fairly close to \$10 billion of that.

Mr. Arthurs: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Delaney, we have about two minutes.

Mr. Delaney: Okay. We can do this fairly quickly, I think. These are mostly questions of clarification.

You used the term "higher education" throughout your brief. How do you define higher education?

Mr. Lewis: For the purposes of an RESP, "higher education" is based on the definition in the Income Tax

Act, which is effectively tied to the Canada student loan program, so it's actually a very broad definition. It includes vocational training programs, trade schools, as well as colleges and universities.

Mr. Delaney: When you mentioned means testing in Mr. Arthurs's question, again, for clarification, would this means test take place at the time of the birth of the child or at the time the child enters higher education?

Mr. Lewis: It's based on the time of the birth of the child. In fact, it's an annual test for continuation of the \$100 annual contribution. The initial \$500 would be based on the means of the family at the time of the birth of the child, and then eligibility for the ongoing \$100 contributions would be based on an annual means test.

Mr. Delaney: Two last quick questions: Would the spending of a publicly funded savings plan be restricted to institutions either within Ontario or within Canada, and, finally, what is the annual estimated cost to the Ontario treasury?

Mr. Lewis: Can you clarify the first question?

Mr. Delaney: When the time comes to actually spend the proceeds of the savings plan, would that be restricted to spending on institutions either within Ontario or within Canada?

Mr. Lewis: It's actually based on the definition in the Income Tax Act currently, and that is not restricted even to Canada. It includes any institution around the world that meets the test for a post-secondary institution within the Income Tax Act. Obviously, the majority of funds that are used within the programs are, in fact, used within Canada. Our proposal would not be to restrict it for use only in institutions in Ontario, but rather to allow families in Ontario to make the decision as to where they wish their children to go for post-secondary education.

Mr. Delaney: And the last question, the estimated annual cost to the Ontario treasury?

Mr. Lewis: We've provided for you a maximum cost. Our estimate would be roughly \$21 million in the first year and then that would grow over time because of the additional \$100 increments. We don't anticipate that you would have 100% take-up on this program. While we would like to think you would, we believe that you would in fact have somewhat less than that. So the actual cost would obviously depend on your assumptions about take-up. But if you assumed a 50% take-up, for example, then your costs in year one would be about \$10.5 million to \$11 million.

Mr. Delaney: Thank you.

Mr. Deeks: Mr. Chair, can I make just one final point? We would love to just leave the idea with you that if a provincial learning bond can't be part of the agenda or the budget for this year, we would hope that all parties would consider making it part of your election platform, because we don't see anything politically ideological in this program. We would love to see it implemented in Ontario as soon as possible.

The Chair: Thank you for the presentation.

DIETITIANS OF CANADA

The Chair: Now I ask the Dietitians of Canada to come forward, please. If you would just state your name for our recording Hansard. We'll give you 10 minutes for your presentation and perhaps have five minutes of questioning following that.

Ms. Leslie Whittington-Carter: My name is Leslie Whittington-Carter, and I'm the Ontario government relations coordinator for Dietitians of Canada.

Dietitians of Canada is the professional association that represents over 5,500 dietitians across the country, with over 2,200 members right here in Ontario. Our organization is committed to working with the Ontario government to develop and implement economic and fiscal policies that ensure the government's future health care expenditures for dietetic services are sustainable and can effectively meet the health care needs of Ontario residents. I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today, particularly as I realize this is the end of several days of listening to presentations. I thank you for your attention.

1510

The document you've received includes more information about our association and the work of registered dietitians as well as our recommendations and supporting rationale for this year's budget deliberations. There are six recommendations in our submission: Allocate funding to implement an expanded regional internship program as the first step in a new training model that will address the shortage of registered dietitians in Ontario; raise the raw food cost per diem in long-term-care homes to \$6.75; provide \$6.5 million to support an increase in the minimum registered dietitian time from 15 minutes to 30 minutes per resident per month in long-term-care homes; provide \$2.8 million in dedicated funding to enhance community care access centre budgets and alleviate the current cutbacks in dietitian home care services; continued support from the government to implement a comprehensive public health strategy; and continued support from the government for family health teams and community healthy centres to include registered dietitians as key members of the interdisciplinary team, with appropriate compensation and professional recognition to ensure recruitment and retention.

For the purposes of this presentation, I am going to focus only on the first two of those recommendations. As far as the shortage of registered dietitians is concerned, I think the government has noted the importance of nutrition in the health and well-being of Ontario residents. This importance is well documented, and the government has recognized this in many initiatives by supporting access to professional nutrition services provided by registered dietitians. However the demand for dietitian services currently exceeds the available supply of trained professionals. Research conducted last year in northern Ontario showed that many positions for dietitians remain vacant for extended periods of time, over a year in many cases; some of them have been vacant for two years.

We applaud the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care health human resources division for their support of a northern Ontario internship program to address some of the most underserved areas in the north. However, even in relatively densely populated areas, such as south-western Ontario, there continues to exist a shortage of registered dietitians, leaving vacancies in long-term-care homes, primary care, community health centres and public health units as well as other areas.

So what does that mean to Ontarians? Well, it means that the residents who need nutrition counselling to manage their health conditions must wait for extended periods of time to see a registered dietitian or they may not be able to access those services at all, and it means that long-term-care homes cannot meet provincial standards for dietitian time and their elderly residents are at greater risk. Communities that would benefit from health promotion activities provided by registered dietitians are not served. The impact of this lack of trained nutrition professionals is felt in all sectors.

One of the primary reasons for this shortage is the lack of internship opportunities. The internship, you may know, is a one-year placement that is needed after graduation from university in order to complete the training to become eligible to register with the College of Dietitians of Ontario. Currently, only about half of the graduates from accredited university programs in Ontario are able to secure internships to complete their training. Last year, the Ontario dietetics practicum consortium submitted a proposal to the health human resources branch for the establishment of a regionally based training program that would increase the number of placements significantly. Our goal continues to be that that program is established as laid out in that proposal. However, we are asking you to consider as an initial step in this year's budget deliberations the expansion of training opportunities in specific areas of the province, namely Kingston and Oshawa, and taking the initial steps to set up a regional program. The cost for this initial step is approximately \$250,000. This is a small investment that will begin to address the shortage of registered dietitians that Ontario is currently facing, a shortage that is expected to worsen as many dietitians approach retirement age.

The second issue that I'd like to focus on is the raw food cost funding in long-term-care homes. Many groups have recognized the inadequacy of the current raw food cost funding for long-term-care residents. This issue has gained media attention over the past several months, and there have been calls from many stakeholders to increase the per diem rate. I believe you've heard some of those recommendations from other groups during your hearings.

The long-term-care action group of Dietitians of Canada submitted recommendations to Minister Smitherman in November 2006 for an immediate increase to \$6.75 per resident per day, with another 25 cents to bring total funding to \$7 per resident per day in 2007. We are cognizant of economic pressures within the health care sector, but I'd remind you that an increase in the raw

food costs per diem can enhance quality of life for residents as well as improve nutrition and hydration status, preventing further escalation of care costs for treatment of acute illnesses.

An increasingly frail resident population, the majority of whom are at nutrition risk, requires nutrition interventions to manage existing medical conditions and prevent further deterioration. Money spent on food could potentially contribute to substantial cost savings in treatments, medications and nursing care. The health and well-being of the vulnerable long-term-care resident population is substantially impacted by the current funding level. Most homes routinely exceed the current funding provided for food. When you consider that homes must produce more than the total amount of food needed for the residents and that many long-term-care residents require their food to be modified either in texture or for therapeutic reasons, the actual amount available drops to less than four dollars—\$3.77 by our calculations. This is far less than what is required to provide a nutritious, balanced and varied menu and much less than what is required to provide the therapeutic modifications to meet nutrition needs of those residents with the most complex needs.

On behalf of Dietitians of Canada members, the registered dietitians in Ontario, I urge you to advise the government to act upon the recommendations included in our presentation and the further recommendations found within the report. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for the submission. This round of questioning goes to the official opposition. Mr. Arnott.

Mr. Arnott: Thank you very much for your presentation. I found it very interesting. As the cost of raw food for residents of nursing homes and long-term care continues to be an issue, I still marvel at how a nutritious diet can be prepared for someone even at \$7 a day. Obviously, through the advice of your membership, this is stretched to ensure that there is a nutritious diet. Can you give us some explanation as to how that's possible even at \$7 a day?

Ms. Whittington-Carter: I think it speaks to the professional dietitians and food service managers that we have working in long-term care within the industry. It is very difficult, as you've said, in order to meet the basic needs of the residents and, above that, to meet provincial requirements, which we support, of offering a choice of all entrees, vegetables, desserts etc. You're funded, for example, for 100 residents in a home, but in order to provide appropriate choice etc, you are providing for far more than 100 portions of food for each meal, as well as snacks, so it is quite a complex undertaking to achieve that.

Mr. Arnott: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Hudak.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you for the presentation. It covered a number of topics. I was going to zone in on the CCAC advice. You had expressed concern that the CCACs over time have diminished their use of dietitians and you suggested earmarked funding for dietitian ser-

VICES for the CCACS. Do you think that's a better way to go about funding CCACs, that there are more earmarked envelopes, or do you think there should be a strong degree of local decision-making on local priorities?

Ms. Whittington-Carter: Local decision-making is obviously the wave of the future. I think that dietitians, along with all the health professionals involved in CCACs, are in a great state of flux, with the current realignment and so on. Our recommendation to make sure that nutrition services are not squeezed out in favour of other services was the rationale for providing earmarked funding for nutrition services.

Mr. Hudak: With respect to public health units, you do note, importantly so, the number of dietitian positions of the public health units that remain to be filled. In fact, there's an ongoing problem with medical officers of health in a number of the public health units as well, so it's not only filling the dietitians. What do you see as their most important role with the public health units? Is it promotional, advisory? Why is it important to have a dietitian as a mainstay of a public health unit?

1520

Ms. Whittington-Carter: I think both the things that you mentioned, the health promotion role—and certainly the focus on health promotion is extremely important. We can cut health care costs in the long run by focusing on some of these prevention aspects early on through school health, school nutrition initiatives and other things that are directed to the communities. Working with the Ministry of Health Promotion and through some of those mandated programs and some of the initiatives that have begun there, dietitians in public health are able to certainly impact the health of the communities they serve.

Mr. Hudak: Why do you think that we do have a shortage of dietitians in the province of Ontario today?

Ms. Whittington-Carter: I think one primarily is the shortage of internships. There are also some concerns in some sectors that the compensation and recognition are not appropriate. Sometimes the working conditions are not conducive to recruitment and retention. We certainly found that, particularly in our survey of northern dietitians. As there are vacancies left, then the workload upon the remaining people continues to grow, so then they are stretched further and further and unable to complete their tasks up to their level of professional ethics, professional responsibilities. Some people have actually left the profession because they feel that with the amount of pressure, if you will, placed upon them, they can't complete things as they would like to.

The Chair: Thank you for your submission.

Ms. Whittington-Carter: Thank you.

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

The Chair: Now I call on the Ontario Federation of Agriculture to come forward.

Good afternoon. I've noted you've been in the room for some time. You likely know that you have 10 minutes

for your presentation and five minutes of questioning. I'd ask you to identify yourselves for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Mr. Geri Kamenz: Thank you. It's good to see you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Geri Kamenz. I'm president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I'm accompanied by my colleague Mr. Jason Bent. I will stay very close to my notes, given this is for the public record.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the committee. I thank you for the opportunity today to present the views of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture on the priorities of the upcoming Ontario budget. I'm sure it will come as no surprise to you that I'm here to advocate on behalf of my members—the farmers and farm families that live and work in rural Ontario. However, it may surprise you to hear that I'm also today advocating for sound public policy that will address all of Ontario's needs, including those of urban Ontario.

Simply put, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture agrees with Minister Sorbara when he suggested in London on January 23 that this budget should focus on helping Ontario's poor and disadvantaged. Frankly, ladies and gentlemen, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture has been advocating that theme for public policy for some time now.

Recently, a Senate of Canada interim report called *Understanding Freefall: The Challenge of the Rural Poor* was issued. It highlighted the fact that the rural poor have rarely been the subject of political attention. It also highlighted the fact that the Senate's interest in studying rural poverty arose out of its concern for the farm income crisis. The committee found, on page 28 of its report, that "Canada's agriculture continues to exert an important indirect influence on rural communities as a purchaser of local products and agricultural business inputs and services."

Ladies and gentleman, as the OFA has often said, stimulating the farm economy will maintain and sustain more vibrant communities which will, in turn, foster rural growth rather than the economic contraction we now see.

The migration of youth and businesses from rural Ontario to urban centres creates expensive consequences. The lack of opportunity in rural Ontario means that off-shore immigration and rural migration crowd our urban centres more each year. This represents the infrastructure, transportation and social problems we see in the news every day. It also creates the ironic need to protect farmland against urban encroachment.

As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development states in its 2006 report, the vicious cycle of a poor agricultural economy leading to rural migration leads to low population density, lack of critical mass for infrastructure and services, declining rates of business creation and fewer jobs. These outcomes, again, weaken the remaining farm operations, and the cycle continues.

Addressing and breaking the cycle requires a simple recognition and commitment of the need to address the farm income crisis. As our brief suggests, the policy required to do so is multifaceted. We have provided com-

mittee members with our suggestions for immediate and long-term policies and programs that will stimulate rural Ontario through the farm sector and start improving the quality of life for our members, rural businesses and rural residents in general. This can reverse the OECD cycle and lead to improved economic development across the province, for the benefit of all Ontarians.

OFA is calling on strategic investments to strengthen Ontario's economic advantage. The OFA is calling for a federal and provincial partnership to deal with immediate farm income concerns—

The Chair: If you could just move back a bit from the microphone. We're getting some distortion.

Mr. Kamenz: Is that better?

The Chair: That's great.

Mr. Kamenz:—in particular, an investment in variable risk management income support programs as developed by the farm sector. An investment in the grains and oilseeds and horticulture sectors is needed to recover serious losses from 2005 and onward. Commitment to production insurance programs for livestock and horticulture producers is needed, as is a federal-provincial program to buy out the tobacco growers and save the communities they were once able to support.

Agriculture is a large consumer of energy, electricity and fuel. The technology adopted by farmers to stay competitive and at the forefront of sound stewardship requires a dependable supply of affordable energy. Frankly, this one-time competitive advantage of Ontario is at risk for our industry and all other industries. However, Ontario agriculture is becoming able to help itself with other energy-dependent businesses. With the proper strategic investments in on-farm energy production, fair pricing and realistic regulations, Ontario agriculture can become a viable and competitive producer of fuel and electricity.

As mentioned, Ontario farmers have already adopted technological advances. Farming reflects a very high degree of factor productivity improvement, typically higher than any other industry. A great deal of such improvement has been the result of public investment in research. However, research support for agriculture has fallen by over 30% in the past 10 years. This threatens our future competitiveness and, therefore, our future. This province needs to reinvest in agriculture, and we are calling for a research budget returning to the \$90-million-per-year level.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are many other suggestions in our brief today touching on policies on government procurement, competitive taxation and compensation for public goods and services that will all contribute to the healthy rural economy we need in this province. I encourage you to look carefully at this range of strategic investments and policy considerations, but most of all, I want to leave you with one thought. That is, the health of the agricultural sector is about the health of the rural economy. In turn, that dictates, to a degree, the health of all of Ontario. If Minister Sorbara is true to his word about addressing poverty in this budget and wants

to deal with it in an effective way, he can take credit for any or all of the recommendations in submissions we make to you today.

The Chair: Thank you. This round of questioning goes to Mr. Prue of the NDP.

Mr. Prue: A whole bunch of stuff. You've got so much stuff here. In terms of energy, how much of the average farmer's budget goes to pay for energy costs, particularly electricity?

Mr. Kamenz: You can appreciate that some sectors are more energy-dependent than others.

Mr. Prue: Of course.

Mr. Kamenz: A global figure would be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 20% of expenses.

Mr. Prue: And that has risen, I would think, substantially in the last number of years.

Mr. Kamenz: In the last 10 years the number was somewhere around 4.5%. So that's a fourfold increase or more.

Mr. Prue: That must be causing some considerable angst.

Mr. Kamenz: Angst, no. It's causing a lot of red ink.

Mr. Prue: Red ink, okay. You went on to talk about a federal-provincial program to buy out Ontario's tobacco growers. We had some of the flue-cured tobacco growers here making deputations. I think there are not that many left.

Mr. Kamenz: No. We're down to around 600.

Mr. Prue: How much would it cost to buy out the remaining ones?

Mr. Kamenz: We're supporting the proposal they put before you, and the price tag on that, I believe, was in the neighbourhood of \$900 million.

Mr. Prue: And you think that's a realistic figure and that we should do it?

Mr. Kamenz: Yes. This is something we've been working on for in excess of 20 months.

Mr. Prue: Okay. Something you didn't deal with—I was trying to read this and listen at the same time—was, "The list of eligible livestock and predators must be updated to fairly compensate farmers for livestock and/or poultry losses." We all know about the fox in the henhouse, but I guess there are wolves, perhaps, with sheep. What other predators—I'm not a farmer, so this is—

Mr. Kamenz: It's interesting. The same as with climate change, we've seen a species shift happening. We've seen the black bear population, partly due to weather and partly due to policies on the spring bear hunt, increase. We've got an exploding sandhill crane population. Turkeys and deer are not huge predatory animals, but they provide tremendous crop losses during the growing season.

1530

Mr. Prue: How much compensation would be needed for turkeys and deer and wolves and foxes and I guess anything else? Sandhill cranes? I don't know what they do.

Mr. Kamenz: The only study I'm familiar with goes back about five years, where we tried to identify the loss.

At that time, it was in the neighbourhood of somewhere around \$250 million. The point is that in principle the province must recognize its responsibility—it manages the wildlife—and consequently some of the outcomes, the economic consequences of that. All we're saying is just update the schedules so that they're more reflective of current market conditions.

Mr. Prue: You went on to talk about—an area you didn't talk about but that is interesting is “This inequity needs to be addressed by developing market mechanisms to allow farmers to be compensated for the public goods and services they provide to society, such as recharge areas, wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration.” What kind of compensation are you looking at here? I mean, all of those things are important; we're very happy that many farmers do that.

Mr. Kamenz: Two very tangible examples today are the Clean Water Act and the proposed species-at-risk legislation. Collectively in society we've said, “There is an across-the-board benefit to having clean water. There is an across-the-board benefit to having clean air. There is an across-the-board benefit to having bald eagles nesting in various parts of the province,” and we concur with that. But what we're saying is that there needs to be an across-the-board cost-sharing whenever we venture to do something like that. If you happen to live in town in a subdivision, your responsibility should be the same as mine, regardless of the fact that I sit on a thousand acres, because we share equally in the clean air and the clean water. That's this whole business of, if we're going to protect a public resource, it is a shared responsibility.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

DYSTONIA MEDICAL RESEARCH
FOUNDATION CANADA
NEUROMODULATION COALITION

The Chair: Now I call on Dystonia Medical Research Foundation Canada to come forward, please. Good afternoon. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. There could be five minutes of questioning. I ask you to identify yourself for the purposes of our recording Hansard.

Ms. Sarah Smith: Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to present to you. My name is Sarah Smith and I represent the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation Canada and the Ontario Neuromodulation Coalition. I'm here today to represent these two organizations. From here on in, I will refer to the foundation as DMRFC.

DMRFC is a non-profit health organization founded in 1976 and is dedicated to serving people with dystonia, a neurological movement disorder. Our mission is to advance research for more effective treatments and ultimately a cure, to promote awareness and education, and to support the needs and well-being of affected individuals and families.

Dystonia is a neurological movement disorder that prevents the brain and nervous system from functioning

properly, resulting in a loss of controlled muscle movement. The disorder causes muscles in the body to involuntarily contract or spasm, forcing the body into painful twisting, repetitive movements and abnormal positions. Every person with dystonia is affected differently. Dystonia is the third most common movement disorder, affecting an estimated 300,000 people in North America. It affects men, women and children of all ages, races and backgrounds.

Despite the prevalence of dystonia, awareness remains limited when compared to other movement disorders such as Parkinson's disease. The disorder can interfere with nearly all aspects of a person's life, including daily functioning such as walking, sitting, sleeping, eating, driving and talking. The appearance of awkward body postures and uncontrollable movements often makes patients reluctant to go out in public and can even cause them to withdraw from loved ones and friends for fear of being misunderstood.

There is no single treatment that is appropriate for all cases of dystonia. Some treatments may include oral medication, Botox injections and brain surgery. These therapies may be used alone or in combination. Medical therapies for dystonia attempt to suppress or reduce the muscle contractions. The results of brain surgery, namely a neuromodulation therapy called deep brain stimulation, have been particularly dramatic in certain individuals. In an effort to educate and build awareness about dystonia and other movement disorders and to help secure care for people suffering from the disorder, the DMRFC is a member of the Neuromodulation Coalition.

As you know, the four major neuromodulation interventions have been subject to recent service limitations and reductions due to funding restrictions and a lack of trained and qualified practitioners. Neuromodulation refers to the electrical stimulation of a peripheral nerve, the spinal cord or the brain, intended to alter the transmission of nerve impulses. Depending on the specific area targeted, it can provide significant relief of chronic pain and restore normal patterns of movement. However, these therapies help people not only with movement disorders like dystonia but a range of conditions including multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, chronic pain and people with urinary frequency or incontinence. Neuromodulation can improve the quality of these people's lives. In some cases, it has enabled patients to regain the ability to walk after suffering debilitating injury to the brain or spinal cord.

Data show that, compared to the rest of the country, people in Ontario have the lowest rates of access to this set of specialized procedures, and for the most part, the situation is getting worse. Only 12% of Ontario patients who are eligible for recommended therapies have access to care. For example, in 2005, the most recent year for which we have data, Saskatchewan had 36 spinal cord stimulation interventions while Ontario performed only 26, despite having a population 13 times as large. Unmet need continues to get worse for most of these patients when hospitals are not provided with protected funding

to treat new patients. As a result, rather than being the leader in treatment of dystonia, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, chronic pain and other diseases through neuromodulation, Ontario is falling further behind.

In order to maintain access to these services and develop an integrated delivery service, it is essential that a provincial neuromodulation strategy be established. I'm here representing the Neuromodulation Coalition, a group of patients and clinicians who have come together to try to move this important access agenda forward. UHN and Hamilton Health Sciences Centre submitted a proposal in May 2006 to the deputy minister to drive this issue forward, but no action has been taken. As part of the 2007 budget rollout, the coalition is seeking specific support to ensure that the four neuromodulation therapies are considered part of the provincial programs portfolio moving forward and to introduce an integrated provincial neuromodulation strategy where these specialized services take place in a small number of dedicated centres of excellence to ensure quality, safety and cost-effectiveness. UHN and Hamilton Health Sciences Centre are the two centres proposed for Ontario.

The provincial strategy recommends a phased-in, volume-based funding approach. The total amount required to serve 1,000 new patients over the next four years is \$23.2 million. This is based on four OHTAC reports published by the Medical Advisory Secretariat in March 2005. Today, the number of patients who have access to these therapies is only a mere 96.

The phased-in approach means that Ontario can provide access for 160 new patients in year one, costing \$4.4 million; 284 new patients in year two, costing \$8 million; 285 patients in year three, for the cost of \$14.5 million; and 1,000 new patients by year four, for the cost of \$23 million. It is imperative that the government make a commitment to bring Ontario access levels up to the rest of Canada over the next four years.

I'd like to direct you to the written brief that I had submitted. At the end, there are a few newspaper articles of patients who have benefited from neuromodulation therapy. An article in the *Globe and Mail* that was just released on January 30 highlights William Orłowski and his successful DBS surgery. He has dystonia. Only 10 months ago, he called my office ready to give up on life. After his DBS in March, he is now in Bermuda setting up a dance school. He was the director of the National Tap Dance Company in Toronto. Prior to his DBS surgery, he had to let go of his preferred vocation. Now he's thriving.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present to you today.

1540

The Chair: Thank you for the presentation. This round of questioning goes to the government.

Ms. Marsales: Good afternoon, Sarah. What a wonderful presentation. I am so proud of everything that Hamilton Health Sciences Centre is doing right now. Recently, I had an opportunity to look through that proposal that was put forward on spinal cord stimulation. It's

difficult to absorb it all, and without any disrespect, at this time of the day I could use a little brain stimulation myself. I was wondering if maybe you could expand on how you see this rolling out. I think this is just a terrific program. Could you just give us a little bit of a timeline on how you see this happening?

Ms. Smith: Again, the rollout is over the next four years. It includes access to these neuromodulation therapies for dystonia patients, multiple sclerosis patients, Parkinson's patients and people with chronic pain. There are four different kinds of neuromodulation therapy, specific to each disease, and they have met with much success.

In terms of the funding, this phased-in approach, based on those OHTAC reports, we see the total number of patients being served as 1,000 over the four-year period. Breaking it down, it's 160 new patients in the first year for \$4.4 million, then doubling that in the next year for approximately 284 new patients at \$8 million, and then reaching a point of 385 new patients at \$14.5 million, then rolling that in to year four at 1,000 new patients.

Ms. Marsales: Do you have any evidence of the cost savings in long-term health care of this new form of health program delivery?

Ms. Smith: It is hard to break down the cost savings. The numbers that I've received are \$18,000 for sacral nerve stimulation patients and \$23,000 for deep brain stimulation patients. The way I can best describe it is by using the deep brain stimulation, because most of the dystonia patients have used that form of therapy. That \$23,000 encompasses travel to and from their rural communities to a health centre. Right now, it's very difficult for people in smaller communities to even get the service. They often can't afford getting there. It involves the renewal of their battery. I don't know if you're aware of what this deep brain stimulation is, but two electrodes are placed inside the brain, and then there is a stimulator that is placed under the chest, and it is battery-operated.

I'd also like to refer you to a clip of Remy Campbell that is in your packages. That clip will show you the before and after results of deep brain stimulation. When she turns her battery on, her completely distorted posture—she's able to stand erect. When she turns her battery off, the dystonic movements reappear instantly. The battery is extremely expensive. Renewing that battery when it dies is factored into this \$23,000 cost-effectiveness savings.

The travel, the rehabilitation, the OT, the speech therapy for the different forms of dystonia are tremendously expensive. Improper diagnosis for people with dystonia is a real problem as well. If people become more aware of the symptoms of dystonia and the treatment of these neuromodulation therapies, it will save people from hospital stays in trying to be diagnosed. That's my understanding of how that \$23,000 per person per year is used in terms of cost-effectiveness.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

I remind the committee that February 22 and 23 are set aside for report writing. The clerk will send out information in regard to deadlines etc. in the next few days.

Mr. Arnott: Mr. Chairman, before you adjourn, I just want to remind committee members that last November the Legislature passed a resolution with respect to this committee. I had moved the resolution with the expectation that this committee could study the economic competitiveness of our manufacturing sector. I tabled a motion with you, Mr. Chair, and the committee clerk, two days ago in Toronto so as to give notice that when the House resumes sitting, it's my hope and expectation

when this committee next sits that we can schedule dates for public hearings on this important issue, because we've lost more than 100,000 manufacturing jobs in the province of Ontario in recent months alone. I think it's an important issue that needs to be dealt with as soon as possible so that this committee can use its expertise and its time to develop an action plan to protect jobs going forward and hopefully put something before the government that it will implement as soon as possible.

The Chair: I'll take that as information to the committee. That concludes our pre-budget hearings. We will adjourn.

The committee adjourned at 1547.

Continued from overleaf

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto	F-1007
Mr. Michael Fullan	
RESP Dealers Association of Canada	F-1009
Mr. James Deeks	
Mr. Peter Lewis	
Dietitians of Canada.....	F-1012
Ms. Leslie Whittington-Carter	
Ontario Federation of Agriculture	F-1014
Mr. Geri Kamenz	
Dystonia Medical Research Foundation Canada; Neuromodulation Coalition.....	F-1016
Ms. Sarah Smith	

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Chair / Président

Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex L)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Président

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans L)

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington PC)
Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge L)
Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant PC)
 Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex L)
 Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest L)
Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord L)
 Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans L)
 Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce L)
Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York / Beaches–York-Est ND)

Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest L)
 Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln PC)

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes

 Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington PC)
 Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford PC)

Clerk / Greffier

Mr. Douglas Arnott

Staff / Personnel

Mr. Larry Johnston, research officer,
Research and Information Services

CONTENTS

Thursday 1 February 2007

Pre-budget consultations	F-967
Barrie Community Health Centre	F-967
Ms. Andrea Butcher-Milne	
Ms. Carla Palmer	
Coleman Care Centre	F-969
Ms. Deborah Wall-Armstrong	
Greater Barrie Home Builders Association.....	F-971
Mr. Matthew Pryce	
Barrie Provincial Liberal Association.....	F-973
Mr. Doug Jure	
Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board.....	F-975
Mr. Rick Maloney	
Talk Is Free Theatre	F-977
Mr. Arkady Spivak	
United Way of Greater Simcoe County	F-980
Ms. Seija Suutari	
Ms. Lilian Boote	
Ms. Gail Michalenko	
Mr. Joe Tascona	F-982
Criminal Lawyers' Association	F-984
Mr. Tom Bryson	
Toronto Catholic District School Board	F-985
Mr. Oliver Carroll	
Metro Area Representatives Council	F-987
Mr. Colin Hamilton	
Mr. Ken Harvey	
Toronto Western Hospital.....	F-989
Dr. Eric Massicotte	
Reena, Toby and Henry Battle Developmental Centre.....	F-991
Ms. Sandy Keshen	
Ms.Carolynn Morrison	
Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	F-994
Mr. Craig Mabee	
Mr. Jim Sykes	
Mr. Hugh Coghill	
Great Lakes International Marine Advisory Committee	F-996
Captain John Greenway	
Mr. Jay Notay	
Caledonia Citizens Alliance	F-998
Mr. Frank Stoneman	
Merck Frosst Canada Ltd.	F-1001
Ms. Kathy Armstrong	
Ontario School Bus Association.....	F-1002
Mr. Stan Sinton	
Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario.....	F-1004
Mr. Andy Manahan	
Mr. Phil Rubinoff	

Continued overleaf