

**Ministry of Community
and Social Services**

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April 23, 2004

Mr. Andrew Papadopoulos
Executive Director
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
502-425 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 1T6

Dear Mr. Papadopoulos:

Thank you for your letter concerning adequate nutrition for social assistance recipients.

We want all Ontarians to have an opportunity to become successful contributors to this province. We also expect people to take responsibility for bettering themselves. In return, we will live up to our responsibility to help them get there. We have committed to helping people on social assistance with skills training, childcare and affordable housing.

I have asked my Parliamentary Assistant, Deb Matthews, to undertake a review of current employment supports as a first step in looking for better ways to help people on social assistance get long-term employment. We also want to ensure that our investment in employment supports is providing the best employment outcomes possible, so that all Ontarians have an opportunity to participate in the labour market to their fullest potential.

Our government is committed to developing a new, comprehensive strategy to increase the supply of affordable housing across communities in Ontario. The new strategy is based on a full partnership with the new federal government for the Affordable Housing Program. We are committed to matching the federal support to create affordable housing for 20,000 Ontario families in need.

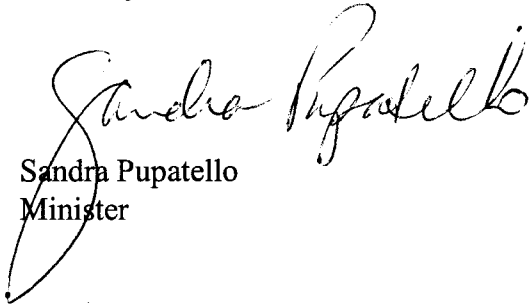
I would like to note that currently, through Ontario Works discretionary benefits, participants are eligible for costs to cover special dietary needs. Moreover, pregnant mothers may be covered for the costs of a special diet prescribed by an approved health professional. Ontario Works administrators provide additional assistance to cover the actual costs of special diets, up to \$250 per person per month.

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Our government is committed to delivering real, positive change that will make Ontario strong, healthy and prosperous. The people of Ontario have told us what their priorities are, and we know that we face some significant challenges in implementing those priorities. We will find creative solutions and together build a stronger Ontario.

Once again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandra Pupatello". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Sandra Pupatello
Minister