



Attn: Mr. John Ellis and Family Service Ontario,

Below are the responses to the three questions Family Service Ontario asked in your September 6th, 2011 letter.

Question: A funding proposal was recently submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. What will your party do to ensure that this proposal is funded on a pilot basis?

- 1) The Ontario NDP is committed to addressing Ontario's crisis in mental health and addictions. Access to timely counselling services is an essential piece of this puzzle. Without access to these services, many Ontarians are forced to go without the support they need—often at a significant personal cost, and at great expense to our health care system. Ontario's New Democrats support the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions final report, *Navigating the Journey to Wellness*. This report provides a vision for re-building our mental health and addictions system so that a core basket of services are available to all Ontarians, regardless of where they live.

Family Service Ontario's proposal to expand walk-in counselling in 37 locations is a well-researched and credible plan. New Democrats would carefully consider this proposal, and work with FSO, as we initiate an overhaul of our mental health and addictions system so that it finally meets the needs of Ontarians.

Question: What will your party do to ensure that Family Service agencies receive an annual 3% increase in funding to provide the services that victims of domestic abuse in Ontario desperately need?

- 2) Ontario's NDP recognizes the vital importance of strong and coordinated services for victims of domestic violence. Appropriate funding of support services for victims of domestic violence and their families is essential. New Democrats are committed to maintaining, and expanding wherever possible, violence prevention and victim's services programs.

Question: How and when will your party commit to \$8.2 million in annualized funding for Family Service agencies?

- 3) Ontario's New Democrats are committed to building a comprehensive system of mental health and addictions supports in the province. The lack of affordable and timely access to counselling services in Ontario is a serious problem. Family Service agencies are an important partner in this system today—and your continued role is essential to the well-being of Ontarians. New Democrats look forward to working with Family Service Ontario, today and following October 6th.