



Media Advisory

December 9, 2019

**HEALTH PROVIDERS AND ANTI-POVERTY ADVOCATES CALL ON PROVINCE TO RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES**

*Proposed changes to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) will put lives at risk*

**TORONTO** – On December 10, International Human Rights Day, Defend Disability, a coalition of healthcare providers, disability and anti-poverty advocates will host a press conference urging the Province to protect the right of people with disabilities to an adequate standard of living.

**Where:** Queens Park Media Studio, Ontario Legislature.

**When:** Tuesday December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

**Speakers:**

- Tammy Yates, Defend Disability
- Andrea Hatala, ODSP Action Coalition
- Scott Guzman, Social Assistance Coalition of Scarborough
- Dr. Michaela Beder, Health Providers Against Poverty
- Karin Baqi, Income Security Advocacy Centre

Since last November, the Province has signalled plans to restrict the definition of disability used to determine eligibility for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). This change would make it more difficult for people with disabilities to access the support they need.

This press conference will be the latest in a number of public comments on the proposed changes by people accessing ODSP and service providers working with them. An estimated 1 in 7 Ontarians live with disabilities and a significant portion of this population rely on ODSP for basic needs and shelter.

Speakers will discuss the risks of the changes the Province has signalled, the importance of maintaining the current definition of disability, and voice their concerns with the Auditor General's report, released December 4, 2019 which perpetuates harmful myths about ODSP recipients and a flawed understanding of this social assistance program.

*Defend Disability is a coalition of people with lived experience of disability, health care providers, experts and other service providers. In October 2019, the coalition sent a [letter](#) to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services calling for a reversal of the changes. See <https://defenddisability.ca/> for further details on the campaign.*

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