

May 15, 1987.

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The Honourable David Peterson,
Premier of Ontario,
Queen's Park,
Toronto, Ontario,
M7A 1A1.

Dear Mr. Peterson,

I have been appalled to learn that the Ministry of Health is implementing only one of the recommendations of the Thompson Report on Environmental Hypersensitivities. Some of us who have become too ill to work are trying to survive under desperate conditions such as lack of adequate social assistance to meet our day to day needs (e.g. food) and very inappropriate housing for our health condition.

I am enclosing a copy of my source of finances since June 1985 (from June 1984 to June 1985, I had no income at all); this shows the sum of money left each month for all other expenses and as you can see, this amount was as low as \$38.99, which is not enough for existence of any kind.

I am also enclosing a copy of my sources for organic food and the transportation costs to obtain it. Because my chemical sensitivities are so extreme, I have to travel great distances to obtain meats where the animals have been fed hay and grain grown on soil where commercial fertilizers , insecticide and herbicide sprays are not used and the water supply is less contaminated; the animals are not given any antibiotics or hormones and, after slaughtering, are not preserved with any nitrates and are not coloured. Vegetables are more difficult to obtain as many sold in health food stores are grown in organic fertilizers or liquid manure to which I react, or they already have a build-up of mould.

I have found the only way I can have vegetables to eat is to go direct to certain farms in season, obtain the vegetables, and freeze enough for a yearly supply. It is even more difficult to obtain fruit that has not been sprayed and I have to just do without many of them. Grains and flour I also have to obtain chemically free. I cannot eat foods with chemical content without becoming very ill.

Since June of 1985 I have been asking the Ministry of Community and Social Services for a diet supplement for organic food to no avail; part of the problem appears to be that the matter gets referred to the nutritionist for the Ministry who lacks adequate knowledge regarding Environmental Hypersensitivities to make a decision. At the present time, my Family Benefits case worker is assessing this again but how longer can I wait?

I am also enclosing a copy of the letter I included in an application for Housing assistance; living in an apartment building is definitely contributing to my health problem and I am not in a financial position to change residences without some help. I asked the Housing Authority if they could subsidize my rent in the meantime as I realize my rental costs are part of my problem; I was told this could not be done as it is "not in the Legislation". Surely there must be some flexibility in the laws of this Province to allow for individual needs.

I should also point out that I would have been left without any of the health care I require if my specialist in Environmental Medicine had not offered to continue my care without being paid. I am happy to be able to report that I have improved considerably over the last six months, but may have required institutional care (at much greater expense to the Province) without treatment. I have a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing and should be able, with treatment, to eventually return to some form of employment.


I am just one person living with this health problem. The Ministry of Health's decision to only accept the recommendation of

further research from the Thompson Report could mean that this situation remains the same for another five to fifteen years. In the meantime, the social agencies will not act because they are waiting for guidelines from the Ministry of Health, who is waiting for further research before setting these guidelines. This matter simply cannot wait and must be addressed now if there is any hope of rehabilitation us back into the work force. I am doing without things that would help me get well or speed my recovery due to lack of finances.

Increasing numbers of people are becoming sensitive to the overuse of medications and chemicals in our environment. Thousands and thousands of dollars are being wasted in the health care system for unnecessary diagnostic tests and trial and error treatment because the physicians do not understand the relationship between environmental factors and chronic illness. Rather than build additions to hospitals to accommodate more sick people, it would be far more sensible to channel funding into preventive health care and health teaching regarding the effects of the environment.

Your lack of funding for O.H.I.P. coverage for treatment by a Clinical Ecologist is inconsistent with your outlay of funds to remove asbestos from schools and Urea Formaldehyde Foam Insulation from homes. Clinical Ecology is the only speciality in Medicine that is able to treat Environmental Sensitivities and therefore should be covered by O.H.I.P. so that there are not people in this Province left without medical care due to lack of money.

As the Premier of this Province, you carry the ultimate responsibility; do you really intend to leave people like myself in such an impossible situation? I would appreciate your personal reply.

Yours sincerely, 

Enc.