

# Advocacy for Poverty Reduction

Moving the Policy Agenda



# Understanding the Context and the Policy Environment: What have we heard this morning?

- Federal
- Provincial
- Municipal
- Health Care/Public Health Sector
- Who are our potential opponents?
- Who are our allies?
- What is our capacity to do the work that is necessary?



# Where are we in this policy subsystem?

Policy Agenda Set: *Pre-election Coalition, 25in5, created; Link between poverty and health made; All parties approached; Liberals commit in election platform*

Policy Development: *Premier created Cabinet Committee and appointed Minister Deb Matthews(MCYS) as lead; Consultations held*



Policy Review:

*Poverty strategy to be released; Pre-budget consultations to take place*

Policy Approval:

*Treasury Board;  
Minister of Finance;  
Ministries involved with  
legislation/regulation*

Policy Implementation:

*25in5 and poverty reduction will stretch into next government's mandate*



# What has changed?

- Nothing and everything
- Economic situation volatile and unpredictable; Auto and manufacturing sector job losses in play
- Economic downturn will make anti-poverty work more important than ever: press the fast forward rather than the pause button (Environics Poll)
- Major focus should still be the province



What are the important next  
steps:

What outcomes do we aim for and  
what are the strategies that will  
get us there?



# Has your Board and Municipality endorsed the 25 in 5 Declaration?

We are asking our government for a plan to reduce Ontario poverty levels by 25% in 5 years and by 50% before 2018. We call this the "25 in 5" campaign.

**Poverty reduction makes social and economic sense.** We believe in an inclusive Ontario, where everyone can develop their talents and contribute to thriving communities. We want a province with a vibrant economy and shared prosperity.

**Serious action on poverty reduction is possible.** The U.K. has reduced poverty by nearly 25% in the past 5 years. Quebec, as well as Newfoundland & Labrador, both have ambitious plans to tackle poverty. *It's Ontario's turn.*

**For Ontario, it starts with a plan.** A plan that brings hope and shared prosperity for all Ontarians: in urban neighbourhoods; in rural communities; among Aboriginal peoples; within racialized and newcomer communities; among single female parents; and persons with disabilities.

**We call on leadership from the Province, working with all orders of government.** Working with all sectors and especially with people living on low incomes, we can create opportunities, remove barriers, and provide supports so that all Ontarians can live with dignity.



Ontario's poverty reduction plan should address three priorities:

- 1. Sustaining employment** means assuring a living standard above poverty for any adult who works full time throughout the year. It means fair pay and stable working conditions for all Ontarians.
- 2. Livable incomes** mean dignity for all Ontarians - including those unable to work.
- 3. Strong and supportive communities** mean affordable housing , early learning and child care, public education and community programs that help people connect.

[www.25in5.ca](http://www.25in5.ca)



# Can you participate in the Pre-Budget Consultations?

You can participate in three ways:

- By email, by going to [www.fin.gov.on.ca](http://www.fin.gov.on.ca) and sending in your comments (do not complete the poll)
- By sending in a written submission
- By requesting to make an oral presentation



# Can you help make the link between Poverty and Health?

- If your MPP is a member of Government, request a meeting and make the link
- If your MPP is a member of the Opposition, send a letter or request a meeting
- Send a letter or email to the Premier, Finance Minister Dwight Duncan, and Minister Deb Matthews (copy your MPP)
- Write a letter to your local newspaper explaining why poverty reduction will improve health outcomes



# Meeting with your MPP

## Government

- Track record or history on this issue?
- Influential constituents to attend?
- Active listening: find out what is most important to him/her
- If you were her/him, how could poverty reduction meet his/her needs and interests (one pager)
- Build a relationship

## Opposition

- Bring him/her the research and backgrounders (less staff, more time)
- How can he/she influence policy?
- May form the next government, therefore longer horizon relevant



# Can we address the SDOH in our work?

- Do our health status reports acknowledge the impact of the SDOH on health outcomes?
- Have we prepared our NFB results to advocate for increased social assistance rates and minimum wage increases?
- Do we address and mitigate poverty through our existing programs and services?
- Can we mobilize staff and partners to address the SDOH?



# Does your local community have a Poverty Reduction Coalition/Taskforce?

- Cambridge
- Peterborough
- Sudbury
- Hamilton
- Niagara
- Quinte/Belleville
- Kingston
- Northumberland
- Kitchener-Waterloo?
- North Bay?
- Peel?



# Are there other stakeholders we can mobilize or reach?

- OMA advocated in August 2008, using the 5 articles published in May and June
- Other professional groups?
- Other sectors?
- Other coalitions?



# Advocacy and Policy Outcomes

- Shift in Social Norms
- Strengthened Organizational Capacity
- Strengthened Alliances
- Strengthened Base of Support
- Improved Policies
- Changes in Impact (Poverty Reduction and improved health status)



*“The job of the [policy] analyst, in this view, is to understand the rules of the game well enough to know the standard moves and have a repertoire of effective countermoves”*

Deborah Stone,  
Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision-making,  
1997

