

2010

Special Diet Allowance: Human Rights Tribunal Decision

The HRTTO releases its Lead Case Decision in March, agreeing with the complainants that the Special Diet Allowance program discriminates against certain disabilities by underfunding or excluding them.

ISAC continues as a lead on developing innovative procedures for resolution of the remaining 200 complaints, coordinates settlement discussions for many conditions in issue, and assists clinic case-workers in assessing the viability of clients' claims in light of the test developed by the HRTTO.

HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL OF ONTARIO	
BETWEEN:	
Brian Ball and the Complainants Listed on Schedule "A" and Schedule "B" and Schedule "C"	Complainants
-and-	
Ontario Human Rights Commission	Commission
-and-	
Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Ontario as Represented by the Minister of Community and Social Services	Respondent
LEAD CASE DECISION	
Adjudicator:	David A. Wright
Date:	February 17, 2010
File Numbers:	HR-1443-07 to HR-1519-07 and HR-1656-08 to HR-1692-08 and HR-1732-08 to HR-1788-08
Citation:	2010 HRTTO 360
Indexed as:	Ball v. Ontario (Community and Social Services)

O.D.S.P. ACTION COALITION



Telling Our Stories: Disability Should Not Equal Poverty

*"In the shadows of the blue collar
A disabled man bows his head
His pocket contains four dollars
Which must stretch thirty days"*

July 2010

Telling Our Stories

In the struggle to ensure the Social Assistance Review proceeds, the ODSP Action Coalition creates *Telling Our Stories: Disability Should Not Equal Poverty*, aiming to give voice to the stories of people on ODSP across Ontario.

ISAC coordinates this massive effort over eleven months, collecting the stories of 236 people from across Ontario, and organizing and compiling them in a major report released at Toronto's Metro Hall in July.

The report gets significant media attention, and provides one of the foundations for the Coalition's submission after the Review begins.

Saving Special Diet

When the March Budget announces that the Special Diet Allowance will be replaced by a new "nutritional supplement" program, ISAC works with 25 in 5, the ODSP Action Coalition and the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario to fight back.

Advocating five key principles, the group works to ensure the continuity of financial benefit as well as broad eligibility for people with extra dietary costs resulting from their disability.

The campaign receives media coverage as both recipients and advocates demand consultation. Finally, government announces in December that

Special Diet will continue, pending the results of the Social Assistance Review.



INCOME SECURITY ADVOCACY CENTRE
Centre d'action pour la sécurité du revenu

healthzone.ca

Groups want input on Ontario's new nutrition supplement

August 23, 2010

Laurie Monsebraaten
Social Justice Reporter

Health and social advocates say they are still waiting for promised Ontario government consultation on the design of a program to replace the special diet allowance that helps about 165,000 people on social assistance.

Many are worried the new, more restrictive program, announced in last spring's budget, has already been designed — without community input — and may be unveiled as early as next month.

Many of the province's most vulnerable are fearing the worst.

"No one has been consulted as far as we can tell," said Vani Jain of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario who is in contact with more than a dozen groups including patient-support groups, nurse and physician associations and anti-poverty organizations.

"The lack of information or transparency around this is fuelling all sorts of rumours and causing a lot of anxiety among the people we represent. It's awful," she said.

About 80 per cent of the province's estimated 130,000 schizophrenics are too ill to hold full-time jobs and rely on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), or welfare for the disabled, Jain said.

Many also suffer physical health problems including diabetes and high cholesterol due to the heavy medication needed to control their schizophrenia, she added.

Until now, they and others on social assistance have been able to access a special diet allowance of up to \$250 a month to help pay extra food costs related to specific medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, high cholesterol and multiple sclerosis.

Kevin Reid, 35, worked for 13 years as an information technology expert until complications due to Tourette's



RICK MADONIK/TORONTO STAR

Kevin Reid, who lives with Tourette's Syndrome, is soon to lose \$129 in a government food subsidy which will impact buying fresh fruits and vegetables.