

The Special Diet Allowance: WHAT DID THE GOVERNMENT DO?

What happened to the Special Diet Allowance?

On March 25, as part of its 2010 budget, the provincial government announced that it will cancel the Special Diet Allowance Program and replace it with a new program.

The government has said very little at this point about what the new program will be. But what they have said shows that the new program will be different in many important ways:

- it will be a “nutritional supplement” program – not a “special diet” program
- it is intended to only help people with “severe medical needs” – not the people who need special dietary treatment to manage their conditions and prevent worse health
- not everyone who is currently on Special Diet will be eligible for the new program – so the government will save money
- it will be run and paid for by the Ministry of Health – not the Ministry of Community and Social Services

The government has said that they will announce the details of the new program “in the near future” but they haven’t said yet when this will be.

The government has also said that there will be a transition period of nine to twelve months during which the new program will be set up.

They have committed to making sure that no one loses their Special Diet Allowance until the new program is set up.

What’s going to happen now?

Many individuals, groups, and organizations across Ontario are shocked and disappointed by this decision.

Check the following websites for information on the different kinds of action that groups are taking to convince the government of the importance of the Special Diet Program – and the importance of providing incomes that will support people’s need for healthy food.

ODSP Action Coalition: www.odspaction.ca

Put Food in the Budget: www.putfoodinthebudget.ca

ISAC is continuing with legal proceedings at the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario to enforce the Tribunal’s order to ensure people with certain health conditions receive additional support. More information about the order is available at <http://www.incomesecurity.org/specialdietdecision.htm>

Check ISAC’s website for updates at www.incomesecurity.org or join our e-list at www.cleonet.ca/email_bulletin_subscription.