

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

Office of the Minister

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**Ministère de la Santé
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July 29, 2011

Ms. Deborrah Sherman
Executive Director
Ontario Peer Development Initiative
720 Bathurst Street, Desk 200
Centre for Social Innovation – Annex
Toronto ON M5S 2R4

Dear Ms. Sherman:

As you know, my Ministry has been discussing a plan to strengthen the independence of the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office (PPAO), by transferring it from inside government to a more independent body.

It is clear to me that there is a great deal of interest in this issue, and I am grateful for the commitment and dedication that you have shown by bringing your concerns to my attention. I now realize that implementing this change requires greater conversation and consultation, and, as a result, we will not move forward at this time with the current plan. My priority is to make sure that we get this right.

In light of this, in the coming months, we will engage our partners across the sector, including patients and their advocates to determine the best way to achieve our shared goals of increased independence for the PPAO. Through the fall we will consult, and make a decision based on your best advice, moving forward with a finalized plan in the winter.

I am proud of the incredible progress we have made together on the issue of Mental Health and Addictions in the province, highlighted by the release of Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, Open Minds, Health Minds.

Our progress is a testament to your tireless dedication to the needs of patients and I look forward to continuing to build on this together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deb Matthews".

Deb Matthews
Minister