

**For immediate release
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**Durham Economic Downturn Task Force advocates
for human services investment in Durham Region**

The Durham Economic Downturn Task Force (DEDTF) met with area MPPs today to highlight the need for provincial investment in human services, given the current economic climate.

On the eve of a provincial budget, the task force initiated the meeting to provide Durham MPPs with data and information showing the increasing demand for human services in the region. The task force also discussed the potential consequences from a lack of social infrastructure investment to meet those demands.

Wayne Arthurs, MPP (Pickering-Scarborough East); Joe Dickson, MPP (Ajax-Pickering); Christine Elliott, MPP (Whitby-Oshawa); John O'Toole, MPP (Durham); and Jerry J. Ouellette, MPP (Oshawa) took part in the information session, in addition to representatives from the DEDTF.

"Human services are the foundation in which to build a successful and stable community," said Wanda Secord, Co-chair of the DEDTF and Executive Director for Durham Children's Aid Society. "Without a strong social safety net in place to support individuals and families our communities will suffer."

The DEDTF is a multi-sectoral group of leaders from key human service providers covering the fields of social services, health care, police services, education and training. Its mission is to raise awareness, advocate and strategize to support those services, which assist Durham residents during this economic downturn.

"We are committed to ensuring that the social infrastructure within Durham Region is supported, as it is the foundation for social and economic stability," said Dr. Hugh Drouin, Co-chair of the DEDTF and Commissioner of Social Services for Durham Region. "As human services providers, we recognize that it is our responsibility to establish proactive solutions to help residents in the region."

The DEDT is currently developing a collaborative strategy with community-based solutions to assist families that are impacted by the economic downturn, and address the greater service needs among residents.

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