

# **Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction**

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## **New Report to be released Monday July 4th: Social Assistance is an Economic Benefit for Hamilton businesses, jobs**

June 29, 2011

For Immediate Release

While our neighbours south-of-the-border will be celebrating a holiday on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Hamiltonians concerned about social assistance and economic development will be rolling up their sleeves and making their voices heard.

Monday will see the release of an important new report on the economic impact of social assistance on the local economy that will be presented to Hamilton City Council. Later that day, Commissioners appointed by the provincial government to review social assistance will come to Hamilton to hear from the public on ways to reform to Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program.

### **Media event: The economic impact of social assistance in Hamilton**

Dr. Atif Kubursi, of Econometric Research Limited, will speak to the General Issues Committee of City Council on a report entitled **The Economic Impact of Social Assistance in Hamilton**. This report debunks the common assumption that social assistance is a burden to the economy and doesn't provide positive economic impacts. The economic benefits to the local economy are, in fact, significant to jobs and for local businesses.

Presenting with Kubursi will be Craig Foye, a staff lawyer with the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, who has long advocated for an evidence-based approach for establishing provincial social assistance rates.

According to Foye, "Dr. Kubursi's report clearly confirms that communities derive substantial economic benefits from the money spent by individuals and families in receipt of social assistance. Foye will be seeking Council support to request that the Government of Ontario introduce evidence-based social assistance rates i.e., rates that are based on the actual cost of rent, food and other necessities.

**Dr. Kubursi, Mr. Foye along with Ward One City Councillor Brian McHattie will speak with media about the report prior to the meeting of Council's General Issues Committee at 9:00 a.m. in Room 264 on the second floor of City Hall.**

**Community event: Social Assistance Review Commission Comes to Hamilton July 4<sup>th</sup>**

Hamilton poverty advocates are also looking towards July 4<sup>th</sup> as an opportunity to have their ideas heard as a first step in reforming Ontario's social assistance system.

Francis Lankin and Munir A. Sheikh, co-chairs of the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario, will be in Hamilton on that day to participate in a community forum. The Commissioners have been appointed by the province to review the social assistance system and recommend changes.

At the forum the public will be welcome to give input. The evening's agenda includes community presentations, opportunity for dialogue and a question and answer session with the Commissioners. **The event runs from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the Hamilton Convention Centre in the third floor Webster Rooms** and will be moderated by City Councillor Jason Farr and Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction member, Laura Cattari. **Media are welcome to attend.**

The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction is coordinating the visit of the Commissioners which also includes meetings at the Good Shepherd Centre and Hamilton Community Legal Clinic. For more information on Dr. Kubursi's report or the visit by the Commission on social assistance review, please contact Tom Cooper, Director Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction at bus: 905-523-5600 x244 / cell: 905-512-7863