

SORT Investigations

Not every SORT investigation becomes a published report, but all SORT investigations have produced results. Here is a list of all SORT investigations to date:

Completed Investigations

City of Oshawa (April 2009): In the wake of an investigation into a closed meeting in Oshawa, the Ombudsman learned the city had defied his confidential document handling instructions and refused to return a copy of his preliminary report. SORT conducted an investigation into Oshawa's failure to co-operate with the Ombudsman's office. The Ombudsman found Oshawa to be acting contrary to law. **Report: *Pirating Our Property.***

Special Investigations Unit (September 2008): The government, SIU and Ministry of the Attorney General agreed to report back to the Ombudsman on their progress in implementing his 45 recommendations to strengthen the Unit's credibility and rigour and dispel perceptions of a pro-police bias. **Report: *Oversight Unseen.***

Homeowner Protection (June 2008): The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services agreed to provide more information to the public about its relationship with Tarion Warranty Corp. after more than 100 homeowners complained that it was unable to help in their disputes. **Report: *Building Clarity.***

Legal Aid (February 2008): The Ministry of the Attorney General launched civil action to recoup some of the \$1 million in public funds spent on defending murderer Richard Wills; Legal Aid Ontario agreed to all of the Ombudsman's recommendations and revised its management of "big cases." **Report: *A Test of Wills.***

Oxygen devices for children (November 2007): The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care agreed to fund the home use of oxygen saturation monitors for children with life-threatening respiratory conditions, and to review the entire Assistive Devices Program. About 50 children have received funding since November 2007. Funding for home use of oxygen saturation monitors came into effect on November 1, 2007, and to date, 47 monitors have been provided to eligible children. Because the issue was resolved, no report was published, but the case was reported as *Life and Breath* in the 2007-2008 Annual Report.

Mental health services for military children (April 2007): The province created a \$2-million emergency fund for children's mental health services and the federal government

committed \$100,000 to help traumatized children of Ontario-based Canadian Forces personnel serving in Afghanistan. Because the case was resolved, no report was published, but the results were announced by the Ombudsman at a press conference, and the case was reported as *Collateral Damage* in the 2006-2007 Annual Report.

Lotteries (March 2007): Ontario lotteries are now regulated by the Alcohol and Gaming Corporation and retailers must be registered and face background checks after the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) was found to have paid multi-million-dollar prizes to questionable “insider” winners. The OLG now asks players to sign their tickets and has installed ticket-checkers at every sales outlet, improved security and recommitted to its role as a public servant. **Report:** *A Game of Trust*.

Compensation for crime victims (February 2007): The Ministry of the Attorney General committed \$120 million to aid crime victims, clear the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board’s multi-year backlog of claims and reform a cash-starved compensation system that was revictimizing crime victims. **Report:** *Adding Insult to Injury*.

Out-of-country-care (January 2007): The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care agreed to overhaul its guidelines for out-of-country care applications and to pay \$75,000 to Suzanne Aucoin, a chemotherapy patient who was wrongly denied coverage. Because the case was resolved, no report was published, but the case was reported as *The Out-of-Country Conundrum* in the 2006-2007 Annual Report.

OHIP (September 2006): Coverage was granted to a 94-year-old man who moved back to Ontario from the U.S. and broke his hip 38 days before his OHIP eligibility was to take effect. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care agreed to the Ombudsman’s recommendation that it exercise its discretion to help the man and his family. Because the case was resolved, no report was published, but the case was reported as *The Difference a Few Days Make* in the 2006-2007 Annual Report.

Delinquent child support (August 2006): The government committed to improved enforcement of support orders through the Family Responsibility Office. **Report:** *It’s All in the Name*.

Testicular implants for boys (May 2006): The Ministry of Health and Long-Term care restored funding for testicular prosthesis surgery for boys under 18, following the Ombudsman’s finding that the boys and their families were suffering mental and financial hardship. Because the case was resolved, no report was published, but the case was reported as *A Medical Necessity* in the 2006-2007 Annual Report.

Disabled support (May 2006): Recipients of Ontario Disability Support Program payments who had been unjustly deprived of funds for nine years because of delays received their money and regulations limiting retroactive payments were revoked. The Ministry of Community and Social Services continues to make reparations for some 19,000 people who were denied benefits because of Ministry backlogs. Report: *Losing the Waiting Game*.

Property tax assessments (March 2006): The government froze all assessments for two years and agreed to implement 22 recommendations to improve fairness, transparency and accuracy at the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. Report: *Getting it Right*.

Newborn screening (September 2005): Ontario increased from two to 29 the number of tests it conducts on newborn babies for potentially fatal diseases, averting the death and/or severe disability of an estimated 50 children per year. Report: *The Right to be Impatient*.

Drug funding (September 2005): Funding was provided for an expensive life-saving drug for a teenager whose family was on the verge of bankruptcy. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care committed to overhaul the system for funding such drugs. Report: *From Hope to Despair*

Registrar General delays (September 2005): SORT's probe of complaints of delays in processing of registrations of births, deaths marriages and name changes found an improvements since the previous Ombudsman's investigation in 2004. In 2007, the government announced guaranteed 15-day service for post-1991 events. No formal report was issued but SORT's monitoring continues and the case was reported as *Faster Service Guaranteed* in the 2006-2007 Annual Report.

Children with special needs (May 2005): Custody was restored to 68 families whose children were with children's aid societies because they could not afford to care for them. The government committed \$10 million for improved services. Report: *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*.

Investigations in Progress

Avastin: Investigation into the provincial Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's funding of Avastin, a drug for colon cancer patients. The province's funding of Avastin is limited to 16 two-week cycles, regardless of patient response to the treatment. The Ombudsman is investigating whether the Ministry's decision to limit funding in this way was informed and reasonable. Announced in June 2009.

Hamilton/Niagara-area LHIN: Investigation into the decision-making process of the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network (HNHB LHIN), including its approach to its mandate of "community engagement" when it deals with proposals for the restructuring of health services. Announced in March 2009.

Bestech Academy: Investigation into the Ministry's enforcement of the provisions of the Private Career Colleges Act and an alleged conflict of interest in respect of a Ministry employee who served as Bestech's president. The Ombudsman will also investigate the Ministry's response to complaints by students regarding forfeited tuition fees paid to Bestech. Announced in January 2009.

Cambrian College: Investigation into Cambrian College's conduct as well as the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' role in monitoring and approving the two-year Health Information Management program in Sudbury. Investigation began in fall 2008.

Long-Term Care: Investigation into the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's monitoring of long-term care facilities and its effectiveness in ensuring nursing homes meet government standards. Announced in July 2008.

PET scans: Investigation into the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's administration of its Positron Emission Tomography program, focusing on the Ministry's process for evaluating the technology and what is being done in other provinces. Investigation began in fall 2007.