

**Public Policy Forum Conference:  
“Expanding the mandate of the Ontario Ombudsman”  
Toronto, February 25, 2016  
Keynote Speaker Mr. Steve Orsini,  
Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Ontario Public Service**

## **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO TRANSFORM PUBLIC SERVICES**

### **Expanding Mandate of the Ontario Ombudsman Conference**



**STEVE ORSINI**  
**Secretary of  
the Cabinet**

**February 25, 2016**

#### **Host Darren Gilmour, Public Policy Forum:**

We are honoured to have here as our keynote speaker this morning, someone recognized throughout Canada as a leader in governance.

Mr. Steve Orsini is secretary to the Cabinet, Head of the Ontario Public Service, and Clerk of the Executive Council. He was appointed to this position in July 2014 and has over 26 years of experience in the Ontario Public Service. Mr. Orsini has held a number of leadership roles, including Deputy Minister of Finance, Secretary of the Treasury Board, and we've asked Mr. Orsini to offer a keynote presentation this morning on the future of government in Ontario. Would you please join me in welcoming Mr. Steve Orsini.

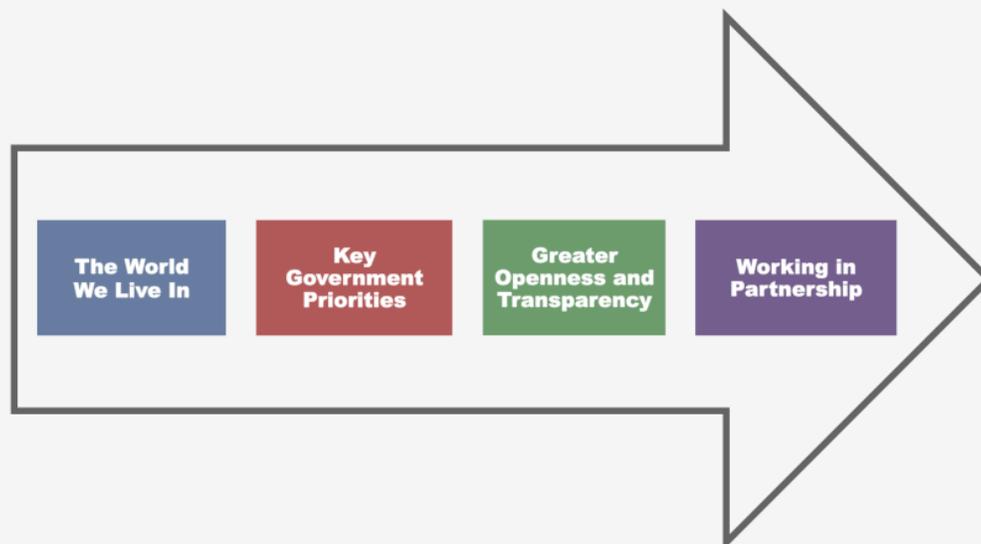
**Steve Orsini:**

Thank you Darren. Thank you everyone for being here this morning, and thank you for inviting me. This is a great opportunity to be here and I'm going to have to put you through a PowerPoint presentation. I know it's too early in the morning to go through one of those so I apologize for that, but there are a few things I want to point out.

I'm a big fan of the Public Policy Forum. I should disclose my bias: I'm on the Board. *[laughter]* It's a great organization; great governance, I must point out. They're doing amazing work and they, as Darren pointed out, they play a particularly important role, bringing public policy, private sector, non-government or non-profit organizations together with labour and others. It's a multi-stakeholder think-tank, Canada-wide, and it's doing great work. So I'm excited to be involved.

And I want to thank Barbara [Finlay, Acting Ontario Ombudsman] for asking me to speak today. I've had a very positive relationship with the Ombudsman's Office and I want to really talk about the relationship we have with the Ombudsman's Office and the crucial role they play, and the changing role that the Ombudsman's Office plays. I'll talk about how we view that relationship, going forward.

## OVERVIEW

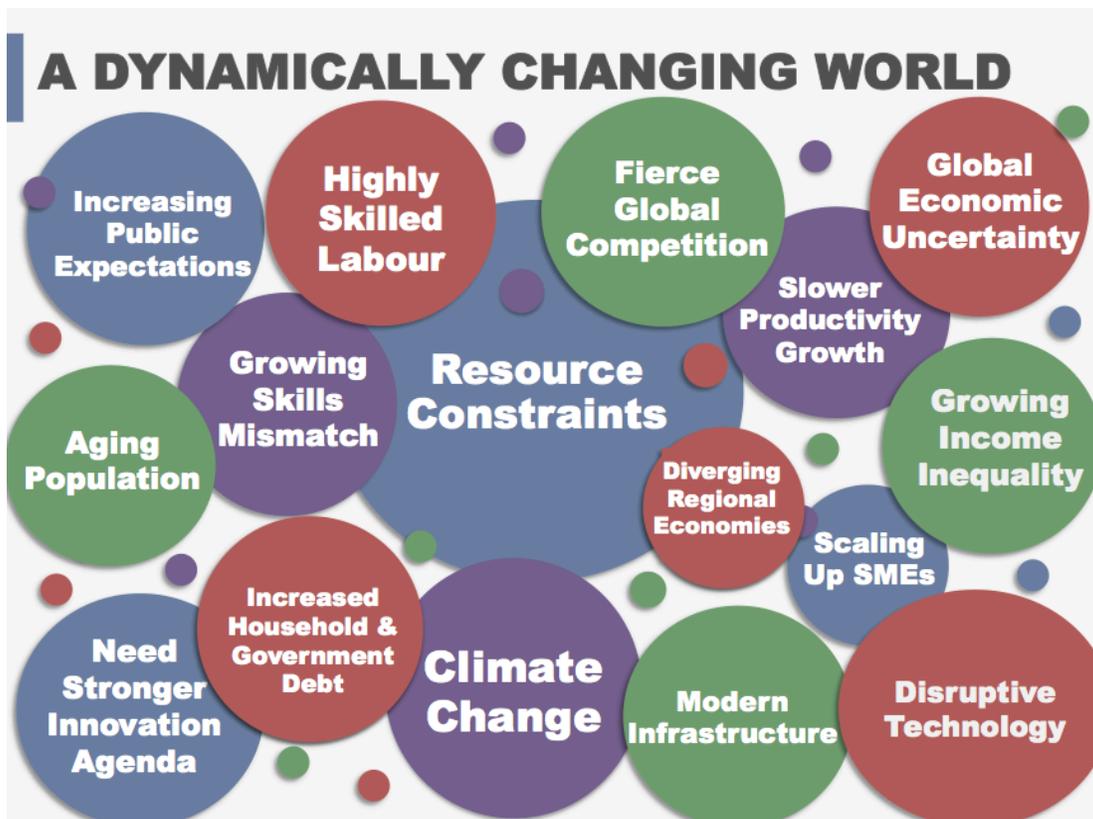


There are a few things I want to cover and I'm not going to go into a lot of detail in each of these, but we can't ignore the world we live in. It impacts how we operate and that's something I want to spend a bit of time on because it translates into everything we do and the relationship we have with the officers of our Legislature.

I want to spend a bit of time on the government's priorities, talk about accountability, and the key drivers of change. We've got to be cognizant of those key drivers and where we think our partnership can evolve with the Ombudsman's Office. Those are the areas I want to cover.

So, this chart here – I spared all the technical data charts, that would be too cruel to go through those, and plus, since I've been in the Cabinet office, they've removed those charts from my presentations. I've always liked complicated data charts, and they figure I'd get hurt by having those nowadays.

But their major themes, and why I think they're important, is we are being impacted by global trends. I'll just talk about a few of them.





We are in a fierce global competition. Our ability to attract investment is being challenged every day. And so how we operate and how we deal with issues is going to be fundamental to creating a more dynamic, innovative business climate. It's going to affect how we operate as a public service, how we regulate.

In the fall economic statement – today's our budget so I'll try not to release any confidential details today in the budget, so I'm going to refer to the fall economic statement, but there might be similar themes - in the fall economic statement, we talked about the need to get regulatory approvals a lot faster. But the public service tends to be risk-averse, for a lot of reasons. You don't want to get anything wrong. It's in the Legislature, it's top of fold in the newspaper. In a world of disruptive technology, how are we going to change faster if we're very risk-averse?

We need to speed up our approvals for major investments. In the fall economic statement, we committed to reducing the speed to get our certificates of assurance, our environmental approvals, cut in half the time. So that means that we're going to move from "we have to review every application", which can take up to two years and by that time we lose the investment, to more risk management. That might mean some things fall through the cracks - how do we operate as an organization?

The speed at which we have to deal, it's accelerating. The disruptive technology means that we as an organization have to take risks, do more pilots. That means we may not get things right 100 percent. But in a world of "We gotcha", "You screwed up", or "You didn't do something properly", that drives us back to a more risk-averse culture. We need to work with our partners and all our legislative officers to find out how do we work together to drive change.

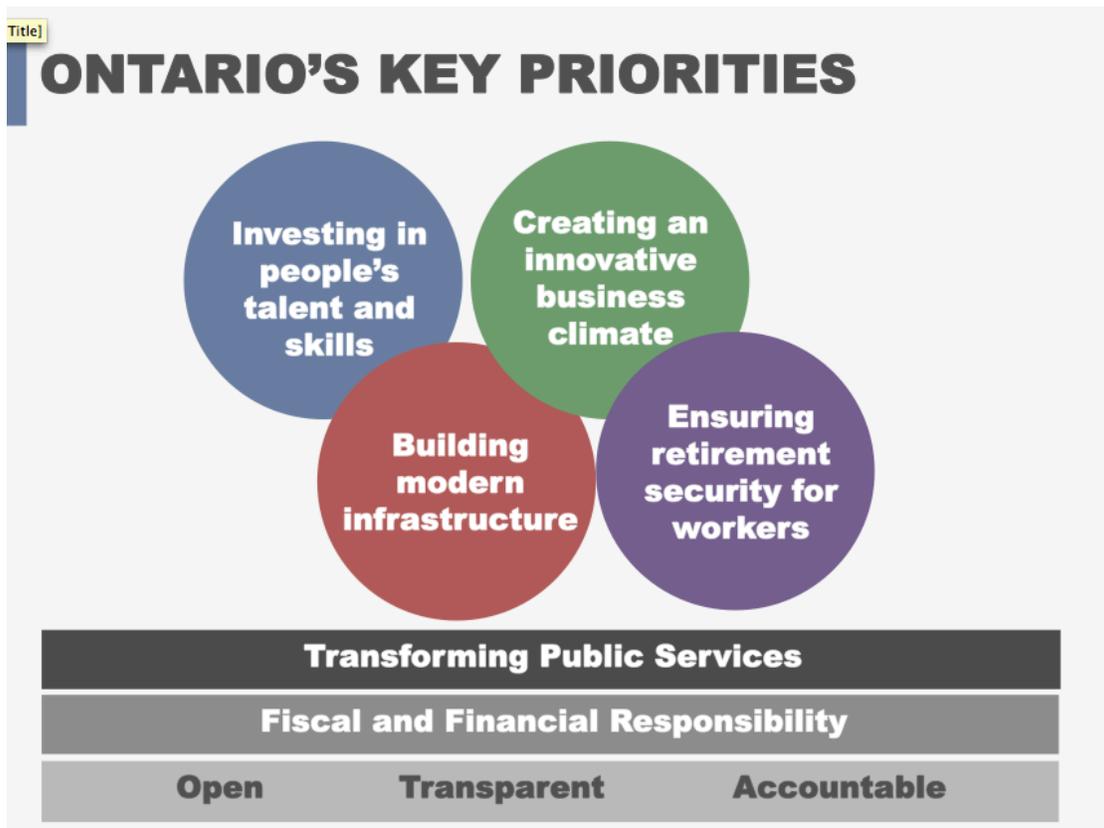
The big one is resource constraints. We don't have unlimited resources to have all the best services, so we might have some areas where people have to wait. We have other areas where we can't fill all the gaps we want to. It doesn't mean we can't drive transformation and improvements in how we deliver programs and services, but it's really important that we understand these dynamic forces that are at play.

If I was a CEO, and someone said to me, we're going to have this group that is going to evaluate how your customers feel, whether you treated them fairly, whether you're providing excellent service. I would say, "That's fantastic! That's exactly what I want." And that's what the Ombudsman's role is.

It's a vital service – and I'm going to argue today, that they need to play a bigger and more important role than they play today – and I'll spend some time on that.

Now, if someone told me, as a CEO, "By the way, they might release reports saying that you're not doing a good job" before they told you, that may not be a good thing. That's why the second part of this partnership is really important.

I won't go through the government's priorities. There are four main ones:



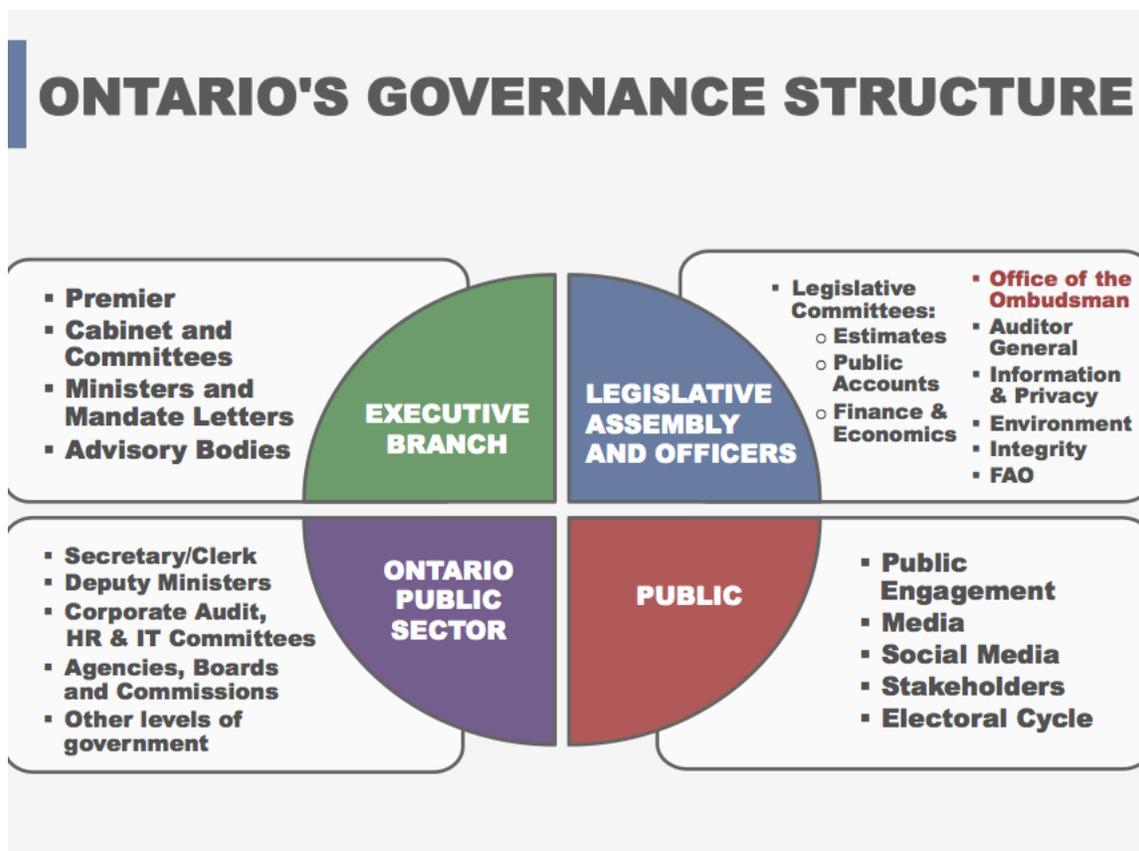
Driving a dynamic business climate. We don't have vast oil reserves in the province of Ontario, we have people – that is our resource. We need to build and train a highly skilled labour force. And you'll hear a lot more about that.

Infrastructure – very important.

The other thing is, as officers of the legislature, we have to think longer-term. Whether it's climate change, or people retiring forty years from now, governments have to think of longer-term issues, and that's part of the government's priorities; not just worry about tomorrow, the immediate tomorrow, but thinking longer-term.

The three foundation pieces: We need to transform how we deliver services. And I use the analogy – it’s like you’re really massively renovating your house while you’re living in it. You have to continue to provide goods and services, deliver important services to the public, but you have to drive and transform how you’re doing things. That makes it a little more challenging. Financial management, accountability, being open and transparent – and that’s the important role the Ombudsman’s Office plays, ensuring a more open, transparent, accountable system. It’s important, it’s a function we need to embrace.

So this is more of a schematic, as to what influences how we deliver public services. It’s not exhaustive, it’s not to scale.



You have the government decision-making on the top left, you have the public service operation on the bottom. I’m going to postulate that the right side is becoming more important, not less. That if I adjusted this pie chart to weight, you would see the right side growing, and the bottom right especially growing. That means we are are going to have to think differently, how we operate, how we engage.

We have more officers of the legislature, with a broader mandate – because the public wants and demands and expects greater transparency and accountability, and we know third-party reviews are really important. We often hire an outside consultant to validate something that we might be doing internally. When I had an issue as Secretary of the Treasury Board in Finance, I always brought in internal auditors earlier, because I knew they were a partner to help us. We know for privacy legislation, we need to bring in the Privacy Commissioner early in the process to make sure we get that right. I'm going to postulate that the role of the Ombudsman as someone who really takes the perspective of the consumer, as the beneficiaries of our services, need to be brought in earlier, more upstream of how we design and implement programming.

You'll see that the public will have a greater influence, and social media will be driving that. We see that. It's fundamentally changed politics in Canada and around the world.

My understanding of the role of the Ombudsman is really important. They have three key functions that I understand.

## **SUPPORTING THE MANDATE OF THE OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE**



**EARLY  
WARNINGS**



**SPEEDY  
RESOLUTION OF  
COMPLAINTS**



**SYSTEMIC AND  
BALANCED  
INVESTIGATIONS**



It's more complicated than this, but the early warning is one we treasure. If the Ombudsman's Office is getting calls that something has gone off the rails or is not working properly, and they can alert us to some glitch in the system, and we can correct it quickly, without having a report and all that – that's value-added. And that's where early warning, working in partnership, is particularly important, and there have been a number of examples where that has worked really well, and we need to embrace that. That means you have to have a good partnership, working relationship.

Dealing with complaints. Complaints are reactive, in a sense. Someone has a complaint – the need to adjudicate and resolve those quickly is very important. If people feel like there's been an injustice, it's even worse when it takes a protracted length of time to address it. But that means we need to work quickly and effectively together as a partnership to address that, so having a good system in place on the Ombudsman's side but also on the Ministry's side, or the department's side, is important.

The last area I think is becoming more and more crucial over time, and that is systemic change. And balance. I'll talk about each of those components. I spent seven years in the hospital sector, and we knew it didn't matter whether a hospital performed a surgery correctly – the patient could come back with complications. Was it the surgery that didn't effectively provide the health care service, or the fact that family or the individual didn't take the prescriptions, follow the direction from the hospital, or there was no homecare support – we are into a systemic network of issues. That means that the last person to touch the file may not be the person that if you're doing a systemic review of the system, may not be the problem or issue to be addressed. Systemic change will become a bigger issue and more important over time, not less.

I think the expanded mandate of the Ombudsman's Office now reaches beyond the province. To other players in the system, to me, they'll see end-to-end much more clearly, the citizen, the individual, and how the system responds to their needs.

We're doing some interesting policy work in the Ontario government, working with other provinces on [issues]. I'll use one example. Youth at risk: We have 19 ministries delivering programs for youth, not all of them geared towards youth at risk. But we know that to really tackle youth at risk, and those who are falling through the cracks, it can't be done from a program perspective. It has to be done from the client's perspective.

So the systemic change – the balance part is, and this is something that is applicable to any third party looking at anyone. It's the government commenting on others, and vice versa. It's that not everything is problematic. If we have a

system that only focuses on “We gotcha”, or “You made an error” – if you got most of it right, but we focus on what you didn’t, a couple of things happen. One is, the public has a distorted view of that service, and they may want to change it for the sake of changing it, and two, we don’t get feedback about what’s working. It’s important to underline the things that are not working, but it’s equally important to highlight the things that are working. That’s important to get that balanced approach. I think the Ombudsman’s Office, and the thoughtful reports,, does that – it needs to highlight the things that are working, but draw attention to the things that aren’t working, because that’s the area we need to focus on.

So how do we build a relationship with the Ombudsman’s Office? There’s a number of key, critical success factors, in my view.

## **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE BETTER OUTCOMES**



			
<b>SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT</b>	<b>ESTABLISH CLEAR LINKAGES WITH AFFECTED MINISTRIES</b>	<b>MAINTAIN OPEN AND ONGOING COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>

The first one is, have a single point of contact. It’s one-window access into an organization. That’s particularly important. The more complicated it is, the more important that role is. If it’s a one-off call, probably less important; if it’s a systemic review, absolutely crucial. That individual also has to take responsibility for establishing all the networks. It may be a number of people within a ministry, it could be across different departments, and that person needs to establish those networks and build those contacts quickly.



Ongoing communication is really important. There are requests for information; sometimes you think they'll be immediately available, sometimes they're not. It's important to understand what's available, what's not, how quickly it will be available. Help to refine the investigation and review, really important.

And the last one is understanding each other's role. We should not be timid or afraid if someone is questioning what we do as a public service. I think that's healthy, to have people come in and say, you know, things aren't working out as well as you think, or you could do better, or these people feel they're being disenfranchised. That's important feedback.

And we have to understand the role of the Ombudsman – they have to be independent, they have to ask questions, and we shouldn't shy away from trying to give them the best information we can within that timeframe. It's that mutual respect is crucial, and we've had that, and it really leads to positive change, in my view, because we both have the same objective: How do we improve public services? Each of us have a role and we need to respect that role.

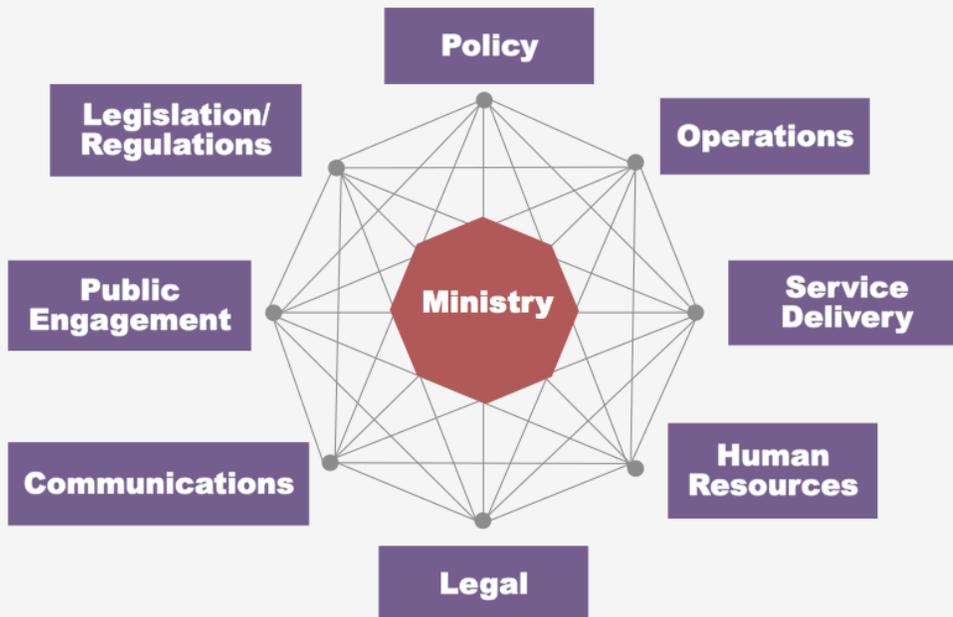
I wanted to talk about – that's our relationship with the Ombudsman's Office. I want to talk about us as an organization, and I'm going to refer to the Ontario Public Service mainly, but I think this is applicable beyond just the OPS.

We have big, complex ministries. The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Community and Social Services – even some of the smaller ministries are really dynamic and have a lot of moving parts. You've got your policy, you've got your legislative functions, service delivery, human resources, communications – it's art and science to make sure all that works well, and that ministries can bring forward and ministers can bring forward important public policy.

But we're in a world of complex organizations and complex systems.

And this chart is one that I really think is where the leading edge of our policy thinking has to turn next, and that is focused not on us as a delivery agent or program department or policy shop, but the citizen, the client, patient, student, whoever you're talking about, has to be at the centre.

## OPS: A COMPLEX ORGANIZATION



We don't do this as well as I think we could. The reason that's very important because we will then realize that we're not the only game in town. We might have a number of ministries delivering important programs and services, but we're only one slice of what that individual sees and what they need in the system. Youth at risk, you might have the justice system, the healthcare system, the educational system, the training component. If each of us tries to fix it independently, we will not be effective. There's this interesting work on the justice side called 'situation tables', and what the police will say is, by the time we get these individuals, it's too late. You have to move upstream, beyond your areas of responsibility. And we see that in healthcare – you cannot integrate patient care focusing on the provider. And so we need to recognize that.

We've done some interesting things to really transform and help us look at the client from that perspective. We did a pilot with Ryerson, I know some municipalities have as well, through a hackathon. It's not cyber-terrorism or anything. We're just talking about people hacking into websites. This is about putting the client at the centre, bringing all the stakeholders together and the entrepreneurs, and having competitions who can come up with the best idea. We did the first pilot with Ryerson on accessibility, but they're being done all over the place.

They may not all work out, but what I like about it, it changes the perspective. It changes the perspective of us looking at it from a ministry perspective, or a department perspective. It shifts the focus, because we're often looking at the wrong end of the telescope. We're looking at who's providing the program, as opposed to who's receiving the services.



And this is a simple chart, but it's a change in orientation of perspective, of really looking at the issue from the client's perspective. And then we may realize that we are not the right organization to deliver that service. We need to work in partnership. [For example], municipalities might be much closer to the ground in dealing with those people in the community. They must have a better window or insights into how the services affect their local population. Why would we be imposing a provincial solution on a really local situation?

The Premier appointed Karen Pitre [as special advisor] on community hubs, and what I like about community hubs is it does three things that go against the grain. One is, it's client-focused. By virtue, you're looking – a community hub is how to deal with the clients' needs in the community. It has to integrate services. That's what a hub is. It's not just a single service; it's multiple services and the synergy among them.

And the third area that's important, it's community-based. Not everyone has the same issues, so it's more case management of community need. That's a different concept, much more complicated. You'll hear a lot more about the role of what we're trying to do in community hubs, working with the municipalities, school boards, and the like. It's changing our focus from, we're providing a program through this ministry, to who benefits from these services.

And that's where, I think, the Ombudsman plays a huge role. Not only do they, by definition, take the issues that consumers, clients and citizens have with the system. So by virtue, their role, I believe, will become more important, not less.

So what are some of the key drivers that I think are going to enhance accountability, openness and transparency?

## CHANGE DRIVER: CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS



70%

Think it is important to provide more services via digital channels in the future<sup>(1)</sup>



71%

Want to be involved in the design of government service<sup>(2)</sup>



55%

Prefer to access government from their smart phone<sup>(3)</sup>



90%

Believe government should match or exceed commercial service levels<sup>(4)</sup>

Sources: (1), (2), (3) 2013 Accenture Citizen Survey; (4): Chicago Pulse Survey

If you look at – these are illustrative, I wouldn't worry about going to the second decimal point on some of these things – but the key thing is, people want to access services through the Internet. And so we really have to think how we move to a digital way of providing services. You'll be hearing a lot more about how we digitize government.



The second area is, they want more on their mobile devices, and I think we really have to change how we deal with things. Our Employment Ontario actually has a chat line, because they noticed for youth in training, having them come in and meet someone or read a document, is not an effective way of connecting with youth, and so now there's a chat function. Now it's within 9-5 still, and I think at some point it will be 24/7, but we're still a long ways off from that. But we're going to have to move to what is more convenient for the consumer, as opposed to the provider.

The second point there is, people want to be involved in the co-design, so you'll hear a lot more of – whether it's crowd-sourcing, or co-design – and we think there's a huge opportunity to involve society to deal with social problems. And we do this all the time. We don't do it explicitly, but we do it all the time. If you look at drunk driving, the designated driver – that's solving a social problem by getting people involved. Our government's – the Premier's campaign against sexual harassment – the bystander. We need to enlist the support, and we're kind of crowd-sourcing more and more functions by involving people in society to work with us to solve these issues. I think a big area will be healthcare - people taking more responsibility for their healthcare. Self-care might be a little bit of a stretch, but we'll see as technology – people will be more empowered to deal with these issues in the future. We'll never have enough public servants to deal with those issues – nurses, frontline staff – we need to figure out how do we enlist society to deal with those front-line issues.

The last one's a bit frightening, in terms that 90 percent of people expect us to keep up with the private sector standard. So there's a challenge and that means, as an organization, we have to think, how do we embrace disruptive technologies? How does that change how we deliver services to people? We won't get it right all the time. And what does that mean, to the role of the Ombudsman as we try to transform, we might be making errors along the way, and how do we learn from that and how do we prevent it from happening in the future.

So, when I'm not at meetings, I'm on the internet pulling off clip art. I've explained to the IT folks – this is work. *[laughter]*

## DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

### Harnessing the Power of Social Technology



So the first row, this is social media, it's really the massive exchange of information - Wikipedia. These are only illustrations. The second row is fundamental commercial change. The third row is really fundamental disruption, and they're illustrative. But e-learning – I'll just talk about the bottom row – our education system is going to face some big, I think positive, changes going forward. How we teach students in the future will change fundamentally. They'll be able to learn on their own, they'll be able to access different programs. And when I do find time to get on the exercise bike, iTunes University has great – any topic, you want to hear the world-leading researcher give a lecture on any particular topic, you can do that. Obviously I need to get a life, if I'm doing that; I used to listen to music, now I listen to podcasts. But e-learning is going to fundamentally change. You can be able to access the leading thinker on any topic more and more, and that's going to have more self-directed learning, I believe.

Crowd-funding. You'll hear a lot of tech funds. It's technology where you can buy things online and bypass the intermediaries. Financial solutions, and banks, and all that. We're going to see that. We've done that already with crowd-funding. The Ontario Securities Commission actually put out rules for people to raise capital through the Internet. And this is only the beginning, and there's a big view that this disruptive technology is going to change, you'll get a mortgage online, and insurance online. It's going to be driven by algorithms. It's just like how Uber



does it, hailing personal travel, and we're going to see that fundamentally change.

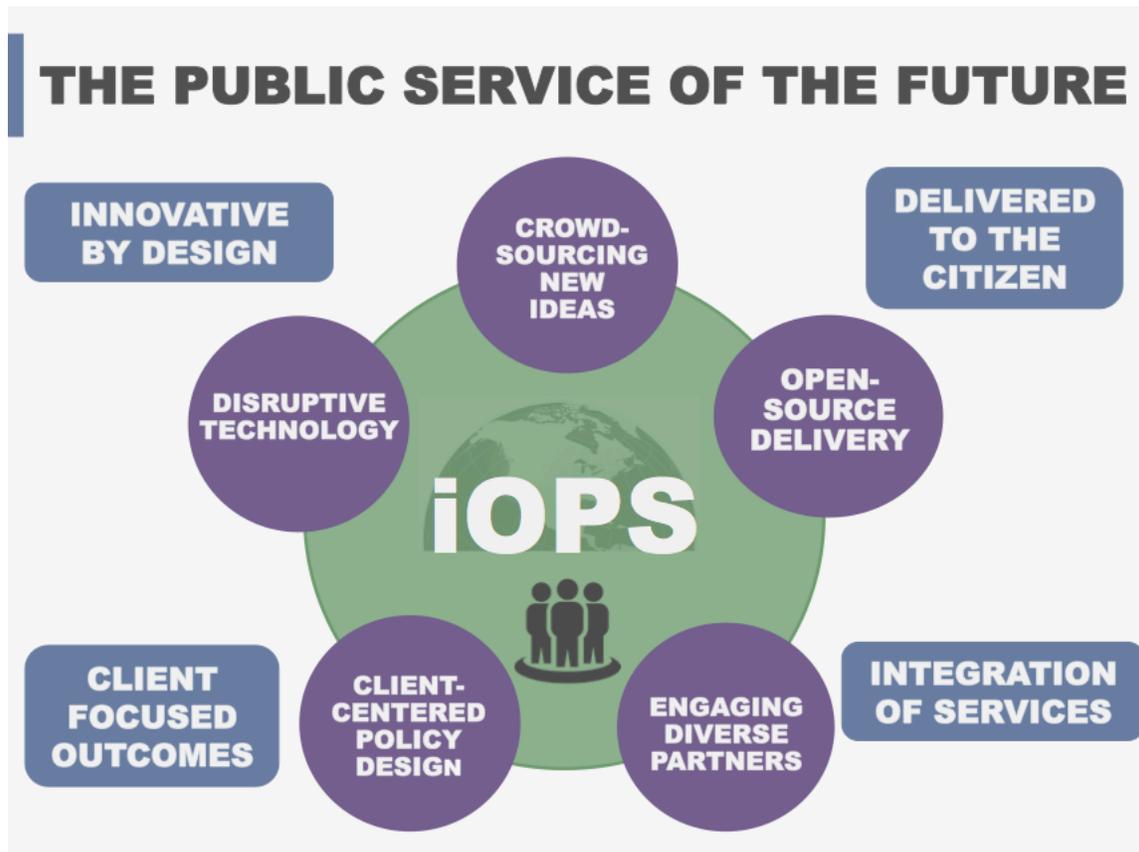
How does the public service keep up with that? There's a big commitment for Ontario to really seize the digital economy, and how do we embrace that, to be more responsive to individuals, and be more cost-effective, and even provide a faster, more timely service.

The last two are more hypothetical, but very possible in the not-too-distant future. We had the clerks and secretaries across Canada, last September, we had the first – that we've organized – policy innovation summit. Each province and territory came in with what they're most proud of in terms of innovation.

And B.C. came in with healthcare at home, through their telephone provider, where they've created an innovation fund to invest in new technology. You can see now that we take the most vulnerable patients to the doctor, to the clinic to get blood work. What we see in the future is that healthcare will go to the patient. Right now it's simple – tests, remote monitoring, heart rate, blood pressure, things of that nature, but that will expand over time. How do we embrace that, from a disruptive technology, quality of service, while still protecting the individual so there's equal access? So the role of the Ombudsman is to ensure we continue to ensure fair, equal, consistent access to individuals, will become more important, not less.

The last one is electronic voting. We won't go there, but it's going to fundamentally change how people participate in public policy, and public discourse, and even voting, and so it's not in the immediate future, but how far off will that be, and what does that change to the demographic voting? We know that the vast majority of senior votes, and the vast minority of youth vote – will that change public policy?

This last slide, I just wanted to talk about some of these things. No one can predict the future, but there are some trend lines that we want to watch closely, and I touch upon a number of them.



Why this is important for this group, is because the Ombudsman's Office needs to understand these dynamic changes as well, and be partners with us. I was saying to Barbara earlier, when I get worried if we're doing something that might have privacy issues, we invite the Privacy Commissioner in early, to look at our initial design, so it's very upstream. We do this for the Auditor General. If we have a big complicated audit, we run it by the Auditor General's office to make sure, did we get it right, so there's no surprises.

I don't think we can do that with the Ombudsman's Office. And we're fundamentally changing how we're delivering a program. We don't want the client or citizen to get lost in the process. I think we should look at building a stronger partnership upstream, much earlier in the system, so the voice – and it's an asset to us, to ensure we're constantly focused on the beneficiary, not the provider. And so that's something that I think, that partnership will actually help us to get to where we want to go, and I think that's a fundamental partnership going forward.

But crowd-sourcing, co-design – those are the things you're going to hear more and more. We consult a lot, and that's a good thing. It's not just consulting. We're moving to collaboration. Consulting, you might have an exchange of views, we heard you, but we ignored you. And that sometimes happens; that's not an

official statement, but that sometimes happens. To collaboration, where we're actually into the co-designing of the solutions. And you get much better results, stronger buy-in, and you can actually deliver things more effectively when people are involved in the delivery system and working with you to design the system.

Diverse partners. We are doing a paper – hopefully it will be done this summer - looking at the future of the OPS. And we looked at the last 20 years, and we're looking at the next 20 years. In the last 20 years, the number of FTEs – full-time equivalents – on the delivery side has been going down a bit. Fifteen percent – used to be 15 percent of FTEs in the Ministry of Health, providing healthcare. It's not six percent, representing 42 percent of all our program spending. So we're more from rowing to steering, and that means working with our partners, our delivery, our transfer-payment recipients and partners.

## **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO TRANSFORM PUBLIC SERVICES**



And that means we're going to fundamentally change how we operate, it's going to fundamentally change how we address issues, and I think result in better outcomes and more consistency, but also better customized to local situations. And the client will be at the centre, whether it's a client, citizen, patient, student, single mom, someone on welfare – we need to change the focus from who's delivering the program to who's receiving the program. The last one's really the integration of services at the community level.



So those are some of the thoughts I wanted to share with you today. I do think the Ombudsman's Office plays a particularly important role. Sometimes there's a little bit of tension in the system, you know, when something's gone wrong, and it has to be disclosed as part of the process of solving the issue. And if it's done in a systemic, balanced way, I think it improves public services, and I know we have that same objective in mind.

I want to thank you for coming this morning and giving me an opportunity to speak with you, so thank you.