

Ontario asked to restore special diet allowance

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People on social assistance are calling on the Ontario government to reverse its decision to eliminate a special diet allowance.

More than 160,000 people on welfare or disability support payments also qualified for the special allowance of up to \$250 a month. Applications had to be signed by a doctor, nurse, dietician or midwife.

The Liberal government recently announced it would scrap the allowance and replace it with a new program after the auditor general suggested the system was being abused.

Connie Harris, a Toronto mom, says the \$72 a month allowance makes a huge difference in helping manage her diabetes and high blood pressure.

Harris says she and many others are terrified they will be cut off when the replacement program is developed.

New Democrat Michael Prue calls the decision to scrap the special diet allowances "cruel, heartless and mean."

Dr. Gary Bloch doubts fraud is behind a big increase in the number of people getting the special diet allowance, and says he thinks it's the result of people becoming aware of their rights.

Premier Dalton McGuinty says the cost of the special diet program for people on social assistance jumped from \$6 million to \$250 million a year and must be reined in.

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