



# CAS in shame

**Trips, cars uncovered in auditor's draft report of kid's agency**

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Opposition parties were demanding answers yesterday after a draft provincial auditor's report revealed that Children's Aid Society officials spent public money on fancy cars, foreign trips and gym memberships.

Children and Youth Services Minister Mary Anne Chambers said she is "not hiding from anything" but would not be free to comment on the allegations until Provincial Auditor Jim McCarter presents his official report on Tuesday.

A draft copy of the value-for-money audit was leaked to the CBC.

Auditors allege senior managers received SUVs worth as much as \$59,000, one individual had exclusive use of a CAS vehicle and received a \$600 monthly car allowance, and one staffer was compensated for a trip to Beijing unrelated to his job.

## **VISITS 3 WEEKS LATE**

Trips to the Caribbean and Buenos Aires were also highlighted in the draft audit, which looked at CAS offices in Thunder Bay, Toronto, Peel and York.

At the same time, the report found that initial

visits to at-risk children were late by an average of three weeks in one-third of the cases reviewed.

McCarter said he doesn't comment on draft reports.

"That's why it's called a draft -- there could be changes to it," he said.

A statement issued by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies expresses regret that it can't comment on the draft report either.

"While management practices must be scrutinized very carefully, it is critically important that Ontarians support the work of individual child welfare workers, who work hard to respond to the overwhelming demand for care for the province's most vulnerable children," the statement said.

NDP Leader Howard Hampton said there have been numerous warnings that something was amiss with the CAS.

"But the McGuinty government has stonewalled, they've delayed, they've sought to blame somebody else," Hampton said yesterday.