BACLA Responses to Discussion Paper on Transforming the Developmental Service Sector

The Board of Directors met on Thursday, November 18th /04 to discussion the issues related to the transformation of the developmental service sector.

This paper will attempt to align the comments/responses of our Association with the questions outlined in the Discussion Paper, as provided by the "Partnership Table"

1. **What should be the roles and responsibilities of different parts of society in supporting individuals who have a developmental disability?**

    ➢ This question could be interpreted to infer that individuals who are in receipt of service, receive all of their life supports with government funding. We would argue that a person with or without formal service receive a great amount of assistive support from a multitude of people, groups, etc., such as families, friends, community groups, employers, to name a few.
    ➢ We feel that supports that an individual needs should be "negotiated" amongst the potential providers of that support. Rather than having supports identified by what a particular ministry, a particular support agency, or a particular person or group in the community, we feel it would be best if all potential providers of a range of supports came together and negotiated amongst themselves who could/should best provide a piece or pieces of the support that is required.

2. **What strategies and resources would help individuals receive seamless supports throughout their lives, including points of transition?**

    ➢ We feel the most critical elements to achieving "seamless supports" throughout a person's life is to have a strong advocate who can guide the person through the 'service world' as their needs change or as they face pre-determined transition points in their lives. Equally important would be to ensure that transition points are identified as early as possible, with as much pre-planning as possible. In our view that should greatly assist in seamless supports for an individual.
    ➢ Another point which should be identified as assisting in making supports seamless is that there should be a collective "wrap-around" by all support networks to focus on providing what the person needs, rather than focusing on the restrictions of service mandates. (i.e. I do this, but I don't do that). More inter-ministerial collaboration would go a long way towards ensuring a seamless delivery of supports also. Mandates need to be flexible to meet the needs of individuals, not their funding silo.

3. **What supports and services that are currently available work well and should be built on for the future?**

    ➢ It is generally felt that a variety of support options should be available to each person in need or receipt of support. A person-centered planning process, which is

respectful of the individual and their needs/wishes should review all possible supports and who can best provide them, and then enter into negotiations to come up with the best support package that can be arranged.

➢ It is also important that supports and services are easily accessible and available from community to community.

4. How should a reasonable level of Government funding for an individual be determined?

➢ Firstly, it needs to be said that funding levels should be fair and equitable. There are many examples across the province of varying funding levels in place for individuals of similar need. There are also TOO many examples of situations where some people get funding for services and supports, while others are not able to access any.

➢ The sector should develop a "standardized cost" for various services types and levels. Perhaps a small range should be identified for each service type to accommodate most considerations that are outside the "norm". Any request for services which would fall outside the identified range, should be referred to an "Independent Review Tribunal" which would consider the application, and make recommendations back to the planning committee. The criteria used by the Review Tribunal could be developed by a team(s) made up of ethicists, service providers, service recipients, and the funding bodies.

➢ This question also raises the issue of whether government funded services should be mandated or not. The most fair and equitable response to this is that sufficient funds should be made available for any and all eligible candidates.(must meet pre-determined eligibility requirements to receive our services or service dollars). We would not be in favor of making services mandated, if there are not sufficient funds available to ensure that all service recipients can have all their needs met. The risk of doing that would be that services would be minimized and reduced to make them of little to no benefit to anybody.

➢ Lastly, it is felt that silo funding, or funding provided to lobbyists can cause an unfair and inequitable distribution of available, yet limited, funds.

5. Services are changing in Ontario for people who have a Developmental Disability. What would you like to see happen?

➢ We feel there is a need for all participants, from all levels of Government to service providers to service recipients taking a leadership role in promoting the value of our services, and the individuals receiving them. While great strides have been made over the past 20 years in terms of increasing the presence and participation of individuals with an intellectual handicap within our communities, there remains mush work to be done in causing a change in the societal view of our sector. We believe that this type of change will occur more rapidly with subsequent generations, if the leadership to promote heightened valuation of our sector.

➢ This will lead to even more meaningful integration, participation, social tolerance and acceptance of the folks we support towards full membership in their community(s).

6. **What do you think are the priorities the Government should address?**

➢ As mentioned above, the Government should take a leadership role in promoting the value of our sector
➢ The Government should enforce greater collaboration between Ministries, as there are many examples of one Ministry imposing something which has a resultant negative effect on the efforts of another Ministry. (e.g. Pay Equity, Fire/Building code issues, WSIB, etc…). There are also many examples of poor collaboration between Ministries during transition points in an individuals life. Ministries should be less concerned about protecting their silo, and more concerned about being able to "wrap-around" a citizen's needs.
➢ Operationally, it would be of great value if the Government provided its TPA's with greater flexibility related to finances. (e.g. multi-year funding envelopes, incentives to realize a surplus at year-end with some retention formula, annual cost of living increases to match inflationary costs which are beyond our control, etc…)