

December 16, 2004

Mr. Kevin Costante, Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Community and Social Services  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hepburn Block  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1G1

Dear Mr. Costante:

On behalf of the Great Lakes Society, I am pleased to submit our collective input on the “Transforming Services in Ontario for People Who Have a Developmental Disability” initiative. We applaud and support the Government’s desire to facilitate positive change for people with disabilities and appreciate this opportunity to provide feedback.

It is our hope that as a result of the transformation process individuals with developmental disabilities will become full participants in all aspects of Canadian society and that the rights and responsibilities of citizens will be enjoyed by all.

As a society, we are planning to forward to you a supplemental document presenting a model for regional specialized services.

The Great Lakes Society is looking forward to the next steps in the transformation process and we look forward to working with the Ministry to improve services for people who have a developmental disability.

Sincerely,

Geoff McMullen  
President

Cc. Great Lakes Society Members  
Myra Wiener, Ministry of Community and Social Services

# Great Lakes Society's

## Response to

### "Transforming Services in Ontario for People Who Have a Developmental Disability"

#### INTRODUCTION

On November 17, 2004, the Great Lakes Society members met to prepare a consolidated response to the Ministry of Community and Social Services' transformation initiative. The following represents major themes within the transformation process and the Society's corresponding input.

#### **Vision**

The Great Lakes Society is supportive of the vision articulated in the draft document. Persons with disabilities need to be able to participate as full citizens in society. Fundamental to successfully fulfilling the vision will be the education of consumers of their rights and responsibilities, as well as a clear understanding of government, agency, community, and consumer responsibilities.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- **Government.** The government will need to establish a broad policy framework that will facilitate the transformation process. For example, the government will need to implement legislation that promotes the hiring of people who have a developmental disability. Also, developing tax and employment incentives must be implemented. Adequate funding, access to services, waiting lists, and service entitlement all represent areas of government responsibility.
- **Service Providers.** Agencies providing supports will need to develop required protocols to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of service. In addition, service providers will be responsible to ensure that services are of the utmost quality and meet or exceed prescribed standards.
- **Families and individuals who have a developmental disability.** Individuals who have a developmental disability and their families need to ensure that they are educated on what supports are available in the system, ensuring supports are complementary to the individual's age and are maximizing the individual's independence.

## Supports

Effective transformation of the developmental service will best be achieved by recognizing three fundamental elements. Service provision, teaching/education and research all combine to provide a solid foundation for service delivery.

### Services

Fundamental to any service delivery system is effective access. Great Lakes support a central collaborative approach to service access. Central access will allow for the development of data specific to individuals in regions of Ontario. Data will indicate changing needs and allow funders to respond accordingly as well as measuring and projecting of needs. This approach will allow for scientific not political decisions. Generally, services need to be locally driven in order to provide supports close to the individual.

Future emphasis should be placed in the following areas:

- **Clinical teams.** Consideration should be given to increasing registered nurse practitioners, psychiatric support, speech and language support, etc.
- **Respite.** Strengthening respite support for children, adults, and individuals living in group homes and family home settings is important.
- **Day activity options.** The Ministry should consider legislative and financial support that would support innovation in day activity options.
- **Adults living on their own.** Initiatives that would increase support and training for adults living on their own should be considered.
- **Continuous quality improvement.** The Great Lakes Society supports processes that improve the quality of service including accreditation.
- **Increase specialized services.** The Ministry is encouraged to support a locally based network of community support teams throughout Ontario. Teams will include behaviour therapists, medical professionals, occupational and physio therapists, speech and language professionals as well as psychometrists and psychiatrists. In addition, the Ministry should consider services that support the elderly living as long as possible in their homes, not in congregate settings. Additional service support should be considered to help keep people in their homes when their needs

significantly change (i.e. group homes and family home settings.)  
Specialized residential supports are encouraged in order to support  
individuals with severe behavioural challenges, or have complex medical  
needs.

### **Teaching/Education**

Education is a key component within the transformation process. Individuals receiving supports should be given opportunities to be educated of their rights and responsibilities as full participating citizens of Ontario. Agencies should take on the responsibility of providing education to their staff in all facets of service delivery. Working closely with local colleges and universities will support recruitment and retention initiatives and develop an increased professionalism in the developmental disabilities sector. While all agencies have an inherent responsibility to the education process, it is recommended that specialized agencies take on formal responsibility for broad educational initiatives.

### **Research**

It is important that specifically targeted community and social service agencies establish close affiliations with Ontario universities and colleges. Formal affiliations will result in a balance between service provision and academic responsibilities. Benefits of this balance will include but are not limited to the following:

- Critical mass of professionals
- Active and invested support from key partners
- Professional plan for recruitment, retention, and marketing of staff, utilizing a labour force strategy.
- Joint appointments.

The Ministry should reinstate the *Essential Service Designation* for agencies in the Developmental Service Sector. This designation will ensure safe, uninterrupted service delivery.

### **Resources**

In the context of a comprehensive approach to complex changing needs, the Ministry will need to increase base and Special Services at Home funding to agencies. This will ensure stability and supports that develop existing and future innovation.

Pilot program should be funded in areas such as:

- Specialized services
- Retention and recruitment
- Rural transportation
- Access to services
- Respite
- Homelessness
- Access to appropriate housing

Individualized funding options should be considered as one of many options available to individuals receiving supports.

Resource decisions need to be based on proven need, the community's abilities to provide, and economies of scale.

Respectfully submitted,

Access Community Services  
Bethesda  
Brantwood Residential Development Centre  
Cochrane-Temiskaming Resource Centre  
Developmental Services of Leeds & Grenville  
Oaklands Regional Centre  
Ongwanada  
OPTIONS Northwest  
Ottawa's Children's Treatment Centre  
Pathways to Independence  
Plainfield Community Homes  
Regional Support Associates  
S.D. & G. Developmental Services Centre  
Sunbeam Residential Development Centre  
Surrey Place Centre