



Labour Relations Update

November 2008

“Contingency Planning” & 2009 Provincial Bargaining

On November 27, 2008, there will be an Information Session jointly hosted by the OASIS Labour Relations Committee & the Provincial Network Human Resources Committee. This session will focus on Contingency Planning with Charles Hofley of Hicks Morley, Strike Experience & Contingency Planning with Executive Directors Tom McCallum of the Elgin Association, Lu-Ann Cowell of Community Living Chatham-Kent and Michelle Palmer of Community Living London. There will also be a chance to have discussion around the “Multi-pronged approach” for the sector and Provincial Bargaining Preparations – 2009. It is hoped that a number of Executive Directors, Board members and Senior management will attend this session to help prepare for what could be another tumultuous year for the DS Sector.

We should clarify that this event will be of interest to all agencies that are unionized, not just those who are facing negotiations in 2009.

Also, don't forget that there will be a Networking Event (Wine and Cheese) the night before for all session goers!

Ministry of Labour / OSACH Update

OASIS recently responded to a report regarding changes within WSIB'S Prevention System. In the report it stated possible changes could occur where WSIB intends to reduce the number of Safety Associations from 12 and combine them into four entities, through a 'realignment' process. In this process, the Ontario Safety Association for Community and Healthcare (OSACH) will be absorbed into one of the three new entities, the other being responsible only for northern Ontario.

This is a great concern since OSACH has made a concerted effort to make connections with the DS sector and to establish working relationships. A clear strategy between OASIS and OSACH has been developed to provide information that will be of assistance to developmental service sector organizations as they work to reduce workplace injuries and WSIB claims. In 2007 the Labour Relations Group also coordinated multiple provincial joint Information Sessions with both WSIB and OSACH for OASIS member organizations.

It has been clear for several years, that the Ministry of Labour has identified the Developmental Services Sector as ‘high risk’, given the record of workplace injuries. Organizations are all working diligently to reduce these injuries, and ensure that both employees and the people being supported are safe. OASIS is extremely concerned that this resource and its focus of support may disappear at a time when it is most needed by our members.

It is hoped that through the letters submitted by OASIS, the WSIB will make every effort to ensure that OSACH be maintained in any realignment process that they undertake, as the community sector would be significantly and negatively affected should the current proposed realignment strategy proceed as outlined.

Update from the MOL and Workplace Violence Prevention

In September 2008, the Minister of Labour issued a public consultation paper with regard to Workplace Violence Prevention and possible changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The Labour Relations Committee responded to the various questions, with a specific orientation to the DS Sector and workplace issues. The feedback requested concerned widening the definition for Workplace Violence, looking at Sector-Specific Requirements, Domestic Violence in the Workplace and Work Refusals.

A key issue that many agencies have is ensuring that the MOL understands that there is a distinct difference with “workplace violence” in the Developmental Sector vs. a workplace in other sectors. Not only would it be beneficial to have a specific distinction but more applicable training to the needs of the individuals supported that present with specific communication issues or sensory needs would also be beneficial. However, the cost for training is a financial pressure that all agencies have in common, yet there is no additional funding to help meet these requirements. Yet another dilemma the DS Sector is facing!

Update from the Provincial Network DS Human Resource Strategy Meetings

The Human Resources Committee of the Provincial Network had another session in September to give further updates on the progress of the various committees. The session summarized the progress of work from the subcommittees and also covered the working timelines of each group. For any further information or questions of the sub groups, the following chart outlines the contacts:

Colette Kent	Co-Chair MCSS
Steve Finlay	Co-Chair PNHRS
Jill Symington	Best Practices
Joe Persaud	Agency Based Training
Nancy Wallace Gero	Competency Based Compensation
Ann Bilodeau	Awareness and Marketing
Janet Nolan	Program Standards
Bob Butella	Core Competencies

In other related news, the Core Competencies Committee has partnered with the Hay Group, a global consulting firm, working to identify key behavioural competencies and proficiency levels for the specific positions in the DS Sector. In December, the group is looking for feedback from interested Self-Advocates and family members. The focus of this effort is to particularly recruit family members and self-advocates who can actively participate in a discussion around what behavioural attributes make a good staff. For more information contact either Holly Duff or Bob Butella.

Something to Ponder...

Health and Safety continues to be a hot topic in the DS Sector. Trying to ensure that everyone has a safe workplace while reducing workplace injuries is a goal of all service agencies. However our costs of training continue to increase and our resources are limited. Just remember that you can access the OSACH web site for various DVD's on training, access teleconferences that have occurred and find information on such topics as: violence in the workplace; safe driving; and, Pandemic Planning. The link to the web site is <http://www.hchsa.on.ca/index.shtml>