



Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs
Agences ontariennes de soutien pour les personnes qui ont des besoins spéciaux

INFORMATION BULLETIN
TO MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

February 2009

Dear Member of the Ontario Legislature,

This Bulletin has been prepared to provide you, our provincial members of parliament, with topical issues and matters related to the Developmental Services sector. It is our hope that by keeping you informed about happenings in our sector, you will be better informed to make decisions, ask questions, and support our collective efforts towards ensuring the highest quality of supports and services for all Ontarians living with a Developmental Disability.

OASIS member organizations' provide services to citizens with a developmental disability in your riding. We appreciate the feedback that we have received from MPP's regarding previous issues, and look forward to sustaining that dialogue.

Funding Commitments & Financial Pressures

OASIS member organizations are concerned that previous multi-year funding commitments, announced by the Minister of Finance in 2007, may be in jeopardy. These funding announcements have been relied upon by organizations. While we appreciate that the economy has taken a severe downward turn over the past many months, many organizations have made spending commitments against the promised funds, including wage increases negotiated through collective bargaining. OASIS has made many requests to various Government representatives at all levels, for assurances that these funds will be forthcoming. To date, and with less than 2 months until organizations' fiscal year-end, compounded with over 50 organization's collective agreements due to expire March 31st, no responses have been received, let alone assurances that the previously announced funding will be provided.

The sector is also very concerned with the additional cost now being imposed on many organizations as a result of the recent amendment of the Employment Standards Act. This amendment, passed in late 2008 with little public notification, now requires employers to provide Public Holiday Pay for their casual and relief employees. In many cases organizations will now incur substantial costs to adhere to the regulation, with no corresponding funding increase to organizations to support the costs. We strongly believe that sectors like ours, and others who are dependent on Transfer Payment funding from the province should be compensated accordingly.

Our member organizations are fully aware of recent bargaining awards reached with both the Education and Health sectors. As importantly, the unions representing the employees in the Developmental Services sector are even more aware of the settlements reached in these other sectors, and have strongly voiced their determination to achieve equal to or better awards during Collective Bargaining this spring, when many of the contracts are scheduled for renewal. We remain hopeful that the Provincial Government will provide for adequate base budget increases to all DS agencies in order that they can avoid further labour disputes, continue to close the wage gap which remains; and allow our member organizations to focus on the important work of providing supports and supervision to Ontario's most vulnerable citizens.

We hope that you find this summary to be of assistance as you debate issues of social concern to the people of Ontario. We encourage you to obtain details on these matters from the OASIS website at: www.oasisonline.ca

Sincerely,

Brian Young
President

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