



OASIS Newsletter November 2016



Developmental service agencies
building inclusive communities,
enabling healthier lives for Ontario's
most vulnerable.

The OASIS newsletter is a bi-monthly newsletter keeping you up-to-date on our member agencies and the Ontarians they serve.

This month's edition includes:

- Recap from the November 2nd OASIS Information Day at Queen's Park
- OASIS' response to Ontario's Gender Wage Gap Working Group
- Submissions to government:
 - Basic income pilot consultation
- Ombudsman's Report
- Every Canadian Counts Update
- OASIS 20th Anniversary: OASIS Sensory Partners
- SAVE THE DATE: OASIS Conference 2017 – May 3-5, Ottawa

AGENCIES MATTER

November 2nd OASIS Information Day at Queen's Park



On November 2nd, OASIS held its second annual information day at Queen's Park which included several meetings with Cabinet Ministers, Members of Provincial Parliament and public servants. The meetings were an opportunity to educate policymakers on the important role of member agencies in the developmental services ecosystem and our policy positions on why agencies matter. More

specifically, we discussed pay equity and the Gender Wage Gap recommendations, the ways in which fiscal funding is being flowed, the August Ombudsman Report, "**Nowhere to Turn**", along with training and tools for agencies regarding accessibility issues. OASIS thanks the many offices and individuals with whom we met, including:

- **Helena Jaczek**, Minister Community and Social Services, **Jonathan Bradshaw**, Senior Policy Advisor, and **Karen Chan**, Assistant Deputy Minister
- **Kevin Flynn**, Minister of Labour and his policy staff
- **Tracy MacCharles**, Minister Responsible for Accessibility, and Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and her policy advisor
- **James Janeiro**, Senior Policy Advisor, Policy Research, Office of the Premier
- **Alexi White**, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the President of the Treasury Board
- **Granville Anderson**, Parliamentary Assistant, Ministry of Education
- **Randy Pettapiece**, PC, Critic Community and Social Services
- **Monique Taylor**, NDP, Vice Chair Standing Committee on Estimates, Critic Children & Youth Services



SUSTAINABLE SERVICES MATTER

OASIS' Response to Ontario's Gender Wage Gap Working Group

The Minister of Labour, Kevin Flynn, announced on November 24th the establishment of a new working group to provide advice and feedback on how government can address specific issues and initiatives identified in the Gender Wage Gap Final Report. The working group includes 14 organizations and two community members. OASIS applauds the government on taking steps towards addressing the concerns identified in the Report.

OASIS has years of experience dealing with complex issues surrounding Pay Equity and has made tremendous investments in time and resources to raise awareness and advocate solutions. OASIS looks forward to continuing to work with the developmental services sector representative and government to ensure the **working group is reflective of all our member agencies' needs.**

COLLABORATION MATTERS

OASIS is responding to the Basic Income Pilot Consultation

In March 2012, OASIS identified five key issues to reduce poverty for consideration by the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance:

- Eliminate the duplication in employment services and utilize existing mechanisms where possible in the local community.
- Provide a guaranteed annual income to all low-income Ontarians.
- Access to necessary health benefits for all low-income Ontarians.
- Eliminate the two-tier system of Ontario Works and ODSP and create a single window to access in local municipalities and First Nations.
- Enable people to save for the future.

We are encouraged by the Ontario Government initiative to launch a [pilot project](#) to study different ways of delivering income support and reducing poverty in Ontario. This initiative supports exploring the concepts raised in the position paper that **OASIS put forward in 2012. We encourage all OASIS' members to review the material and consider attending a consultation session or provide feedback.** The

Board will also be participating in the consultation and will develop a position paper on this issue prior to the deadline for submission.

For details on consultation sessions and to register for a session, please visit ontario.ca/basicincome.

Learn more:

[Basic Income Discussion Paper](#)

[Consultation guide for the Basic Income Pilot Project](#)

Ombudsman's Report

On November 10th, OASIS, as a member of the Joint MCSS/Developmental Services Sector Partnership Table, attended a Special Teleconference on the [Ombudsman's August 2016 Report](#). The purpose of the teleconference was to **address the Ombudsman's recommendations, discuss opportunities, and identify areas where the Partnership table can take a leadership role.**

OASIS is committed to being part of these discussions so that we are able to better inform our members, and in turn, our families who are supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. This includes measuring the impact that has been made **since MCSS' investment in preventative strategies, ensuring information that is shared with families is relevant and easily accessible, as well as better coordination with CCACs and MOHLTC.**

We will ensure to keep you updated as we continue to meet and work with the **government to address the Ombudsman's recommendations.**



Every Canadian Counts Update

The federal government's intent to pass a **Canadian with Disabilities Act**, or what some have called the **Accessibility Act** has generated much activity and interest as the Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities, Carla Qualtrough, has called for public discussions about the nature and content of the legislation.

Every Canadian Counts has partnered with the Canadian Association of the Deaf in that consultation process calling, not for an **Accessibility Act**, but an **Opportunities Act**, one which will address the need for support services for people with disabilities. This is in keeping with the ECC view, shared by our colleagues in **Australia that "barriers are less to do with particular impairments and more to do with the lack of guaranteed access to customized plans of timely support and development"**.

Recently ECC has presented to the Lifelong Caregivers Support Group and Jumpstart programs in Lambton. ECC will be attending the International Initiative for Disability Leadership Conference in February 2017 in Sydney, Australia where it will be attending workshop on the Australian National Disability Insurance Program implementation. ECC is also working with the federal government and other disability groups in the performance review project of the Office of Disability Issue of Economic and Social Development Canada.

ECC would welcome your support as supporter, organizational endorser and/or financial contributor. See our website at everycanadiancounts.com

OASIS 20th ANNIVERSARY

As OASIS celebrates their 20th Anniversary within Canada's 150th sesquicentennial year, we pause, reflect to understand what "Greatness" is happening beyond the Developmental Sector, the Province and throughout the rest of the world. Change is the map for Evolution and Transformation is the driver to Explore it. We know that sustainable transformation requires energy, focus and good health of our organizations and most importantly our leadership teams. Mindfulness and Wellness will be key as we move from Surviving to Thriving and towards an informed vision of how technology, innovation, and new approaches are changing the face of what we do.

As we look to the future OASIS wants to recognize the efforts of our many volunteers who have helped shape OASIS become the organization it is today. This month we focus on the achievements of the Sensory Partners.

OASIS Sensory Partners

Only a few agencies across the province of Ontario currently address the needs of individuals with sensory loss.

People who are Deaf, blind, deafblind, visually impaired or hard of hearing require specialized support and environments that are sensitive to their physical and communication needs. As such, employees that work in these settings are required to develop highly specialized skills in many areas, including language, communication methods, and mobility, to meet a full spectrum of diverse and complex needs.

When sensory loss is concurrent with other disabilities, it can complicate service delivery in the absence of adapted environments and adequate staff training. Currently, there is a gap in addressing the needs of this population in the developmental service application process. They are not being identified first as having sensory loss; often other disabilities or perceived behavioural issues are assessed as the primary grounds for support.

When an individual with a developmental disability that includes sensory loss accesses their local DSO, the OASIS Sensory Partners propose that the DSOs and local agencies be considered for collaborative outreach education and respective training for their support team. The right referral will ensure that correct services are provided, as well as prevent unnecessary expenses and potential behavioural and communication issues.

The OASIS Sensory Partners is a partnership of OASIS members with a shared purpose of ensuring a consistent, comprehensive community based service system for sensory impaired children and/or adults.

In 2013-2014, the Sensory Partners implemented the Outreach Education and Training Project (ORETP) to highlight services and supports that are effective in meeting the needs of those with sensory loss to the nine provincial DSOs. This initiative was a huge success; the ORETP trained over 100 DSO employees. Feedback after the training was very positive, indicating that participants agreed to strongly agreed that the content was useful and interesting, with practical **examples**. **“The material and content was rich with information. It was without a doubt probably *one of the most informative presentations that I’ve had*”**, said one participant.

The Sensory Partners applied to the Developmental Services Employment and Modernization Fund to develop a Process Strategy for ORETP. This strategy is complementary to the current DSO application system to ensure that individuals with sensory loss have access to support from agencies with environments that have been specifically adapted to meet their needs. Unfortunately, this proposal was not accepted.

From 2014-2015, the OASIS Sensory Partners worked with MCSS to collect data related to the demographics and number of applicants with sensory loss in each region from the Developmental Services Consolidated Information System (DSCIS). This data clearly indicates the demand for improved coordination and collaboration of specialized services.

A second round of ORETP training, initiated by the Sensory Partners, commenced in 2016. Three of the nine DSOs are slated for completion of the training. The Sensory Partners aim to further analyze the data collected from the DSCIS, and

look forward to continued collaboration with the DSOs.

SAVE THE DATE: OASIS Conference 2017 - May 3-5, Ottawa



[Save the Date!](#)

Have you reserved the dates of May 3rd to 5th, 2017? You will want to! This 20th Anniversary celebratory conference will be a fun filled event that promises content that will challenge your thoughts on service delivery and visions for the future! You will not want to miss it! **And at the same time, you will be in Canada's national capital as Canada celebrates 150 years as a nation!**
