



News Digest

September 2014, Issue No.17

Message from the President

I had the opportunity recently to speak briefly with Premiere Kathleen Wynne and thank her for her support of the Development Services Sector and the \$810M allocation of new resources. I must say how impressed I was by her genuine honesty, warm personality and extensive understanding and knowledge of our sector. She was very clear that this government clearly understands that the Province of Ontario will not abandon vulnerable people at the expense of austerity measures.

The OASIS Communication Committee and our identified consultants, The Edelman Group (formerly the Devon Group), have created a comprehensive step by step strategy to cement our branding with the Government of Ontario and to pursue our identified goals and objectives in an orderly and systematic manner. This process will actively engage you - our membership - and keep you informed of the threats and the opportunities that will occur into the future within the unfolding Transformation Process and the distribution of the \$810M over the next three to four years.

OASIS as a founding member of the Canadian National Disability Insurance Plan is committed to seeing the development of such a proposal in support of all Canadians, as modeled on the National Disability Insurance Scheme recently inaugurated in Australia. Although this effort is in its initial embryonic stages, we believe that government needs to invest in this project so that a comprehensive empirical feasibility study can be completed. To this end, OASIS will approach Federal MP's and Provincial MPP's with a view to supporting this important work with necessary resources. OASIS recognizes that other organizations and groups within the Developmental Services Sector and the disability segment as a whole have already done some significant ground work in this area and it is our expectation that we will be able to build on this valuable effort. We look forward to connecting with our community partners who will support this initiative and work with us to see it come to fruition over the next five years.

New resources are coming into our sector and they will be coming differently than they have in the past. I commend to your attention our continuing focus on, "Will You Be Ready?"

The next meeting of the OASIS Board of Directors will take place on September 10-11, 2014 in Ottawa. As always, members are welcome to attend Board meetings. We welcome you to join us or contact me prior to the meeting to share your ideas and concerns. I can be reached by email at president@oasisonline.ca or by phone at 1-800-961-9144.

Sincerely,
L. David Barber - President, OASIS

Will You Be Ready?

Forecasting future expectations of all the various stakeholders are extremely difficult and at times, even frustrating. Over the past four years expectations continued unabated in spite of the mandated funding freeze. Now we have to consider new expectations in the face of unprecedented investments in our sector. Many of these investments will be eaten up by the existing needs and pressures. However, based on our conversations at various Ministry tables we do know this; business as usual is done and we need to be ready to work with a Government who will be expecting massive and possibly radical system change.

So we need to engage in a process of trying to forecast the future and ensuring we are ready. The past four years while incredibly difficult have hopefully given our sector the collective skills to be nimble and ready to take on and be out front for the challenges we will be facing. Fortunately we only need to look at our partners in the Health and Children's sector to get an idea of what may be coming our way in Developmental Services.

In Health integration is a catchword for a whole manner of items from formal partnership agreements to out and out amalgamations and mergers. Some Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN) have forced integrations while others have encouraged and supported voluntary processes. Many health service organizations have partnered in areas such as coordinated intake, common client records and back office efficiencies such as shared HR and accounting systems. Each and every LHIN regards these agreements and processes as evidence of success no matter how small. The Southwest LHIN which manages a 2 Billion dollar budget has gone to great lengths to trumpet the success of an amalgamation of three community based mental health organizations. This amalgamation led to the creation of a 20 million dollar organization and is their biggest integration to date. A drop in the bucket compared to the overall amount of health dollars they manage.

In the Children's sector massive change is on the horizon with the recent announcement regarding lead agency designation for Children's Mental Health Services in Ontario. In phase one fourteen lead agencies have been identified and over the next few years will evolve to oversee all Children's Mental Health services in their respective geographic areas. Accountability regarding funding and services will devolve from the Ministry to these lead agencies. These lead agencies may choose to pull the funding and deliver the services themselves. Regardless of how this new system evolves the Ministry of Children and Youth Services has high expectations of efficiencies and improved services for children and youth experiencing issues with mental health.

We can be sure MCSS is looking closely at the Health and Children's sector examples of system change. They are consistently telegraphing the message that the status quo of how our sector operates and is structured is not good enough. We have two choices: wait for change to be imposed or each and every organization can start looking at ways to partner and collaborate in ways that will give MCSS pause before imposing changes. Amalgamations and mergers? Where it makes sense and results in increased or improved services - definitely. Anything that can be demonstrated to improve efficiency,

productivity or improved services needs to be examined and undertaken. If we as a sector do not take control of our destiny we can be certain, MCSS will.

Every Canadian Counts

Developmental disability can affect anyone, and it does affect over 200, 000 Canadians and those that care for them every day.

In spite of living in a wealthy country, our systems for supporting these Canadians are failing, leaving many in crisis. This is expensive, irresponsible, and cannot be tolerated any longer.

Every Canadian Counts (ECC) is an emerging coalition of organizations, families, and individuals concerned with the wellbeing of Canadians living with developmental disabilities. We are calling on our governments for a nationwide support strategy and security for all Canadians who are affected by developmental disability now, or in the future.

Regardless of the abilities or needs we live with, we believe EVERY CANADIAN COUNTS.

ECC is hitting the road this fall to meet with people across Ontario to discuss the future of disability supports in Canada. Send your name, email address and city/town in an email to info@everycanadiancounts.com to be added to the invitation list for your region.

Upcoming Meetings

Greater Toronto Area – September 24, 2014 (6:00 – 8:00pm)

Kitchener – October 28, 2014 (6:30 – 9:00pm)

Register at <http://eccwrmeeting.eventbrite.com>

The Every Canadian Counts website on the benefits of a national disability insurance program is fully operational. Members are encouraged to visit the site and take the pledge to be a Supporter of Every Canadian Counts, and to add the link to their website:

<http://everycanadiancounts.com/>

August Executive Meeting Highlights

Operating Pressures Survey

A draft of the third Operating Pressures Survey Report was reviewed and will be available to members who participated in the coming weeks.

OASIS - Queen's Leadership Program

Information on the November session of the OASIS Queen's Leadership Program was sent out at the beginning of August. The session is filling up quickly with just a few spots remaining. Please register online at: <http://business.queensu.ca/custom/OASIS/>.

Social Inclusion Through Strategic Investments

The Provincial Network released the final draft of the report Social Inclusion Through Strategic Investments, Partnership and Action Plan 2014-2015. To read the report, go to <http://oasisonline.ca/top-stories/social-inclusion-through-strategic-investments/>

Welcome New Members

Two new OASIS members were welcomed at the Executive Committee meeting, the Alice Saddy Association in London, and Community Living Port Colborne-Wainfleet in Port Colborne. This brings the current membership to 176 organizations.

Introducing OASIS Board Member, Robert Mitchell

Now retired, Robert worked as an independent management consultant for 30 years to international development programs in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. He was based in Pakistan for 4 years in the 1990s.

Much of his work focused on the capacity building of non-profit organizations. These clients provided a wide variety of services in agriculture, business and community development to marginal income groups. As well, many of the client organizations were active advocates for improved government policies.

In the 1970's Robert taught and wrote high school mathematics curricula in Canada and Africa (Cameroun and Swaziland). He holds degrees in engineering and international affairs.

