

# Focus Newsletter Fall 1998

## [Central Admin Costs Under Siege](#)

### [Facility Depopulation](#)

### [ISA: Software Presentations Involve Over 300 People](#)

### [CMCS Launches Employer Database Club - EDC](#)

### [Erosion of Agency Purchasing Power: A Threat to the Service Sector](#)

### [Featured Best Practice - Rights and Responsibilities Video and Booklet](#)

### [Member Agency Highlights](#)

### [Featured Web Site - Charity Village](#)

### [Legislation - Revisions to the Ontario Building Code and the Ontario Fire Code](#)

### [Changes to Family Benefits](#)

## Central Admin Costs Under Siege

Recent memos from MCSS Area Managers to Board Presidents concerning central admin costs, have moved to cap central admin subsidies. It is acknowledged by area managers that many agencies are already below these admin caps for all years, not just 98/99. Memos go on to say that agencies must continue to seek admin efficiencies, regardless of their current Allocated Central Admin levels.

What is concerning about this memo is the fact that neither MCSS nor anyone else has any rationale or data to support caps, benchmarks or otherwise. It is even more disturbing that area managers are asking agencies to lower central admin costs even further than the 10% level.

History in this service sector has shown clearly that it can be penny wise and pound foolish to weaken admin structures. In the past, many agencies in Ontario went through major reorganization exercises, operational reviews and restructuring, resulting in huge consulting costs and severance pay outs. A lot of this was precipitated by rapid growth without corresponding strength in admin infrastructures.

Due to the long-standing uncertainties around what appropriate levels of central admin funding should be, OASIS has set up an ADHOC committee to ascertain whether it will be possible to develop admin benchmarks to use as guidelines for the service sector. This committee has been meeting for several months and will continue to do so until we have a draft summary to share with member agencies.

This issue is further complicated by two major factors:

- 1) no two agencies are calculating admin costs exactly the same way because MCSS' guidelines are full of interpretational loopholes; and
- 2) there has been little work done around service quality evaluation correlated to admin costs. In other words, an agency with 5% admin costs may be falling apart at the seams and how would one know from the raw admin cost data?

The Area Managers are saying they will require valid justification of agencies requiring more than the designated cap. Given the above variables, agency justification may vary dramatically and so, we suspect, would the rulings of Area Managers.

Without establishing admin benchmarks which have some relationship to service quality and without tightening up the rules about what constitutes allowable expenses, it is conceivable and even likely that inequitable admin cost cuts could be made which will seriously harm some agencies' ability to function effectively.

## Facility Depopulation

As deinstitutionalization moves into final phases, new challenges are being introduced for community service providers. In the first years of this initiative, individuals with less complex needs were moved into the community service system. As institutions approach complete closure, communities are faced with a series of different issues and challenges.

Some of the things to consider are as follows;

- 1) new and more frequent staff training;
- 2) physical size and strength of staffing;
- 3) possibly modified restraint techniques;
- 4) community acceptance issues/public relations;
- 5) risks and safety for clients, staff and community;
- 6) added costs for building maintenance;

### Related Topics :

[Archives](#)  
[Mission Statement](#)  
[By-Laws](#)  
[Correspondence](#)  
[Focus Newsletter](#)  
[Special Documents](#)  
[MPP Bulletin](#)  
[OASIS Workplan](#)

Choose a link above for more info.

### Site Highlights

[Careers / Agency Job Postings](#)

[Policy Database](#)

[The Annie Oliver Award](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Atlas of Resources in Intellectual Disabilities](#)

Click above to view a highlight.

- 7) philosophies around choice, restraints and person centred planning;
- 8) staffing ratios and added costs; and
- 9) building in funds for specialized supports such as behaviour management, crisis intervention, anger management, etc.

A recent study in Simcoe County provides insight into this new set of recommendations. The study is entitled "Community Living Initiative Report", published by Pierre Marchand of PJM Associates and is available by contacting Pierre directly at (905) 717-0607.

---

#### **ISA: Software Presentations Involve Over 300 People!**

A team from OASIS have travelled the province showing what the ISA computer software package, commissioned by OASIS, can do to quickly complete the forms.

Presentations were made in Kitchener, the Golden Horseshoe (Brantford), South Western Ontario (London), Woodstock, Barrie, Lindsay, Kingston, North Bay, Ottawa and Toronto.

Over 50 agencies have purchased the disc. *A great step to gathering our information in a similar way.*

The process has been divided into two parts. First, the collection of data required by the Ministry by the year 2000. Secondly, an individual costing and management tool. For further information, contact Woodstock and District Developmental Services, (519) 539-7447.

---

#### **CMCS Launches Employer Database Club - EDC**

The Centre for Management of Community Services has created a database of employers that have a track record of hiring people with disabilities in wage-paying positions.

The focus is on employers in two categories:

- 1) Corporations with branch locations in different communities, ie: McDonald's, Loblaws, Walmart, Magna Corp., Royal Bank, LOF Glass, etc., and b) generic industries that would be present in most communities, ie: hospitals, school boards, municipal Governments, Business Improvement Associations, Police Forces, etc.

This database will be a valuable tool for job developers and coaches who want to target their job search strategies. You can spend your time pursuing companies with greater potential for success. It will give you more knowledge about your prospects and help you to secure more jobs for people with disabilities.

For more information, call (416) 297-6467 or fax (416) 297-6673 or email: [cmcs@istar.ca](mailto:cmcs@istar.ca)

---

#### **Erosion of Agency Purchasing Power: A Threat to the Service Sector**

Over the past six or more years, the effects of 0% cost of living adjustments, budget cuts, legislated cost increases and increased costs generally, have resulted in a 10-13% loss of purchasing power for the Community Living Sector.

Examples of additional costs are: WSIB rate increases; pay equity losses on the benefits portion; increased utilities and purchased services; CPP increases; and in some cases, the cost of meeting new fire code legislation. There are others, to be sure.

The net result of this is that agencies have, in most cases, had to terminate staff to balance budgets. The concept that there is admin fat in the system, is a thing of the past. However, admin cuts are only part of the story. Middle Management levels have been weakened in some agencies and functions such as care taking, maintenance and secretarial support are being thinned to the bone.

All of this puts operational efficiencies in jeopardy. Buildings are not getting cleaned or repaired adequately. Staff performance is often not adequately reviewed and evaluated. Information systems get bogged down with glitches and issues which no one has the time to deal with. In some agencies, even front line staff ratios are being culled to cut wherever possible.

Non-profit agencies cannot generally increase the cost of service to the consumers or sell more service/goods such as would happen in the private sector, in response to increased costs of doing business.

If the private sector did not have the means to address cost increases, they would go out of business. In the non-profit sector, service deteriorates in the short term and fewer consumers get access in the longer term. In addition, in many instances employees indirectly subsidize the system through inadequate compensation, poor working conditions and so on.

The questions many in the industry are asking are: when will the hemorrhaging stop and how much is too much? This is a sector which is considered a poor cousin on the block. MCSS transfer

payment agencies' compensation levels are shamefully low (confirmed by proxy pay equity comparison) compared to Health, Education and most other publicly funded sectors.

All of this is to say nothing of the coming barrage of cuts and restructuring which will come out of "Making Services Work". Admin costs are being targeted once again. With absolutely no rationale about what admin structures ought to look like, one gets the distinct feeling that there is absolutely no human side in the government's push to show the world balanced budgets.

The consumer base of our service sector has not historically had as much political clout as other sectors. People are becoming increasingly aware of what is happening. It is important that agencies, individually and collectively, work towards increasing this awareness over time.

This is an awareness which must be communicated to government whenever and wherever possible.

#### **Featured Best Practice - Rights and Responsibilities Video and Booklet**

In order to ensure that all the individuals that we serve are made aware of their rights, a staff committee developed a package consisting of a video and a booklet outlining the rights, together with the responsibilities of all individuals. Both the booklet and the video are made available to all individuals when accessing any service of the [North Bay Association for Community Living](#).

The video was made through a co-operative effort of the Community Living and staff and students from the Canadore College Broadcasting, Television and Video Program. North Bay's own individuals acted in the video which depicted situations where rights were being respected and responsibilities accepted.

The booklet presents the same information as the video, but the information is presented in four different ways; words, picture symbols, photographs and examples of activities, were all used so that all levels of comprehension and all learning styles were respected.

#### **Member Agency Highlights**

##### **[Ottawa/Carlton Life Skills Inc.](#)**

Ottawa/Carlton Life Skills Inc. is in the process of developing a policy related to how agencies deal with homeopathic medications. This policy takes into account, the rights and choices of families and clients. At the same time, it considers the liabilities of agencies.

This is a policy that may be of interest to a number of other agencies throughout the province.

##### **[Collingwood Community Living](#)**

CCL has recently redeveloped its client information management database with the expertise of the software development company CoreSolutions. The tool is comprehensive and service sector specific.

The system will include, among other things, reports and information on the following:

- general client information;
- medical contacts and appointments;
- incident/accident records;
- waiting list information;
- PCP dreams and needs reports;
- PCP team contact information;
- automated letter merging to families, clients and supporting team members;
- lease agreements; and
- a host of other data.

This database has the potential to save valuable time and help improve support to clients in a number of ways.

This tool is in the final stages of testing and will be available to interested agencies in both WINDOWS and MAC format.

##### **[Reena Foundation](#)**

Reena Foundation has developed an outreach program for children, teenagers and adults. This is a series of evening programs which includes such courses as art therapy, indoor sports, music appreciation, computer club, relationship building, etc.

This serves as an excellent example to other agencies as the kind of educational support that agencies can be involved in.

##### **[Norfolk Association for Community Living](#)**

Rhonda Clarke Bruyn, the Executive Director of the Norfolk Association and Annie Oliver, who is on

the Board of Directors, have both been heavily involved with OASIS. Their untiring efforts have helped to bring OASIS through the first year of growth. All OASIS member agencies appreciate this significant contribution.

#### **Barrie and District Association for People with Special Needs**

The Barrie and District Association for People with Special Needs is planning and preparing for six new individuals from the Adult Occupational and Huronia Regional Centres.

In addition, a new day program to accommodate ten people, is being planned for their property in Springwater.

#### **The Elmira and District Association for Community Living**

As a result of the changing physical needs of four clients, a proposal was submitted to MCSS outlining the immediate need for financial assistance in order to build a barrier free home. Assistance from MCSS has been so far declined as Capital Funds are seemingly only available for building related to the deinstitutionalization process.

The Board felt that the safety risk for these four individuals was too great and therefore took the initiative at a cost of \$300,000.00, to build a new home for these women, who are moving in on October 28th and are extremely excited at the prospect.

This Association will continue to appeal to our partners for financial assistance.

#### **Ottawa-Carleton Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities**

A special welcome to E.D. David Ferguson, recently hired by the Ottawa/Carleton Association, a founding agency of OASIS.

David replaces Tim Porter who retired. David was formerly Executive Director of Ottawa Valley Autistic Homes.

#### **Featured Web Site- Charity Village**

This web site calls itself the "supersite for the non-profit sector". The format is interesting. There is a Welcome Centre which outlines the purpose of the site and explains that Charity Village has no religious or political affiliations, and strives to maintain objectivity and balance in its treatment of issues.

Visitors are invited to explore all the stops along the Main Street of Charity Village.

Some destinations have been designed for non-profit managers, staffers and fundraisers, while others are primarily for volunteers, donors and supporters. There are special sections for members of the media and vendors of products and services who wish to meet new customers at Charity Village.

The 'stops' on Main Street include Newsweek, with information on news briefs, conferences, seminars, events and linkages to other sites.

Another stop is the Career Centre which provides career opportunities and job search assistance. The Bus Station provides online resources, publications and discussion for non-profit organizations, as well as information on sources of funding. The Library provides up-to-date information on books and research. Downtown provides an in-kind exchange and "Professional Building".

This is a Canadian site which gathers mainly our national information but also provides some international information and links.

**<http://www.charityvillage.com/charityvillage/main.html>**

#### **Legislation - Revisions to the Ontario Building Code and the Ontario Fire Code**

Previously, residences for developmentally disabled with less than 10 residents were considered to be exempt from the retrofit provisions of Section 9.5 of the Fire Code. However, the Office of the Fire Marshall now says that they are not exempt.

This could mean additional requirements on residences that can be costly. A waiver of the requirements can be given by the local fire department, with the possible involvement of other conditions. We know of at least one agency where the local Fire Marshall stated that the code does not apply.

*Where does this leave agencies?*

If the Fire Marshall insists that these regulations apply, it could virtually mean the whole concept of community living could be perceived as institutional type living, counter to what we are all trying hard to achieve with regards to peoples homes.

#### **We can only make the following suggestions:**

- meet with the local Fire Department in order to determine the applicability of the revisions to the Fire and Building Codes in your community;

- follow-up with letters clarifying your understanding of the codes and how they apply to your agency;
  - if required, investigate costs to bring all of your residences up to the codes;
  - inform your Area Office of the increased costs to provide residential care; and
  - ask for Area Office funding to cover the increased costs.
- 

### **Changes to Family Benefits**

#### **Currently under FBA, there are two disability tests:**

- 1) Permanent Unemployment (PUE); A person who is unable to work for prolonged periods of time; and
- 2) Disabled; A person with a major physical or mental impairment and as a result, is severely limited in activities of daily living.

Under the new definition, a person has a disability if they have a substantial mental or physical impairment that restricts one or more activity of daily living which include personal care, functioning in the community and in the workplace and is expected to last at least one year.

#### **Some of the reported changes are as follows:**

- As of June 1st, Ministry of Health will pay 100% of allowable costs for clients who are eligible for the ADP and are receiving ODSP or Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (formerly known as the Handicapped Children's Benefits).

-As of June 1st, clients are able to keep all interest earned on cashable assets. Under the ODSP, allowable levels of cashable assets have increased to \$5000.00 for singles, \$7,500.00 for couples and \$500.00 for each child.

There is to be rapid reinstatement if a job does not work out. Currently, those leaving FBA for longer than a year, would have to reapply, which includes retesting for disability status and financial eligibility.

As of June 1, under ODSP, for people who try employment and whose job ends, the following rules apply:

- if their condition is not expected to improve, they will not have a disability review and they may return to ODSP at any time if they are in financial need; and
- if their condition is expected to improve, they are retested at a set date.

[webmaster](#) | OASIS copyright 2005