OASIS

Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs

August 23, 2005

Kevin Costante, Deputy Minister
Ministry of Community & Social Services
6th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9
Via Email

Dear Deputy Minister,

Re: Transforming Services in Ontario for People who have a Developmental Disability

On behalf of OASIS, I am pleased to forward the attached submission for your consideration. The paper, entitled 'OASIS II', sets out views and recommendations supplementary to those provided in our November 2004 submission regarding the 'Transforming Services' initiative. Copies of our November 2004 submission and the more recent submission by Reena (Successfully Transforming Services in Ontario: The Social Policy Challenges Involved in Expanding the Continuum of Care for People with Developmental Disabilities) are also attached; specific elements of both documents are referenced in 'OASIS II'.

I would like to reiterate that OASIS considers it fundamentally important that a new longer term vision for the developmental services sector articulate, as both a central objective and a core commitment, that Ontario will become the pre-eminent jurisdiction in Canada respecting the provision of high quality developmental services and supports. As recommended in our November 2004 submission, a new vision should also include a commitment that this will be achieved as soon as possible but, in any event, no later than 2015.

OASIS also considers that, as part of a 'transformed' approach, and to both enable and ensure the same dignity for individuals with developmental disabilities that is accepted as the norm for non-disabled individuals, it must become a standard within Ontario that people with developmental disabilities will be provided with the supports and services necessary to assure personal security, access to good health care, shelter, education and the myriad of other basic necessities.

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In OASIS' view, it is clear that substantially increased funding for the sector will be essential on an ongoing basis to achieve these goals. It hardly needs stating that the developmental services sector is under-funded and that this chronic state of affairs must change if a valid and sustained transformation of service delivery is to be realized. Although innovation, streamlined administrative processes, multi-year funding, greater use of direct funding, and much improved access to generic community assets may result in some financial efficiencies in the sector, it must be recognized that, in overall terms, such gains will likely be relatively minor and will be far from sufficient to accommodate the sector's evolving needs. Core services will remain dollar intensive and it is simply not viable that a high quality transformed system can, will or should be cost neutral.

OASIS continues to stand ready to assist in practical ways that might serve to augment the work of your staff. We would suggest that specialized expertise in areas such as data management, quality assurance and accountability is available from OASIS members, and we would be pleased to facilitate bringing this expertise to your initiative. Finally we expect and trust that the transformation initiative will be successful, that change will be evolutionary, and that other concerned ministries will play a full part in achieving solutions that are truly holistic in nature.

Yours truly,

G.D. Braithwaite
President

C: OASIS Board of Directors