



Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs

Agences ontariennes de soutien pour les personnes qui ont des besoins spéciaux

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Dear Member of the Ontario Legislature

Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs (OASIS) provides leadership through sharing ideas, information, knowledge and interacts with government and other organizations on issues affecting its members.

OASIS is a provincial volunteer run association that has been providing leadership to the developmental disability sector and interacting with government for more than 17 years. OASIS is comprised of 173 transfer-payment agencies that provide services to approximately 60,000 individuals with developmental disabilities, employ 30,000 full-time, part-time and casual staff, and receive over \$1.4 Billion in operating funding, primarily through the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). For more information about us and the valuable work we do please visit our website <http://oasisonline.ca/>

Operating Pressures

It should come as no surprise to the members of the Ontario Legislature that OASIS member agencies are experience significant operating pressures. This is the direct result of four years of static operational funding. A recent OASIS sponsored survey of developmental service sector agencies (representing more than 89% of the government-funded services across Ontario) found these results:

- 62% of respondent organizations are cutting hours of staff
- 51% are eliminating staff positions
- 58% are not filling open positions (e.g. maternity leave)
- 18% are reducing program hours of operations
- 7% are permanently closing programs
- 16% are shutting down programs for a specified period of time
- 26% are changing program delivery methods
- 47% are increasing the number of clients served in programs

In short, agencies supporting our most vulnerable citizens are struggling to maintain existing services and the lives of those supported are being negatively impacted. In addition families waiting for services see no hope in ever receiving even the most basic services such as respite or day supports.

While funding has remained static, legal obligations and inflationary pressures continue to impact developmental service agencies. Many agencies are legally obligated to meet pay equity requirements. Some agencies have made the difficult decision to not pay this legal obligation in order to maintain essential services. Others have made the opposite decision and are meeting their legal obligations, but at the expense of service delivery.

Despite inflation remaining low, it still impacts operational budgets. Items such as food and transportation are not discretionary costs. Anyone filling up their car at an Ontario gas station knows all too well how the price of gas has risen over the past number of years.

Many agencies in Ontario are reaching their limit regarding capacity. Soon our province will see real and deep service cuts in developmental services. Cuts to day supports, reducing respite services for families and the possible closure of residential supports loom large on the horizon. We have all seen the stories of families abandoning their loved ones. This is the level of desperation and need that communities and service providers are struggling to meet.

OASIS is pleased to see the legislature come together in a show of unity through the creation of a Select Committee on Developmental Disabilities. OASIS and our sector partners are committed to being part of the solution and look forward to presenting our data to the Select Committee in the near future.

For more information, please contact Jane Joris, President of OASIS at tjjoris@execulink.com or by phone c/o Amanda Brown at Community Living South Muskoka, 705-645-5494, ext. 285.



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