



**Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs
Agences ontariennes de soutien pour les personnes qui ont des besoins spéciaux**

***OASIS INFORMATION BULLETIN
TO ONTARIO MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT***

January / 2006

Dear Member of the Ontario Legislature

OASIS agencies provide services to citizens with an intellectual disability in your riding. We appreciate the feedback that we received from MPP's regarding previous issues, and look forward to sustaining that dialogue. As part of OASIS' ongoing efforts to communicate issues of importance for our member agencies, we have prepared this Information Bulletin, briefly outlining current topics of most concern.

Funding:

Adequate funding for community based services is of increasing concern throughout the province. Wait lists for persons in need of our support continue to grow and by some estimates have now reached 8000 persons. Many ageing families are no longer able to cope with their loved one in the family home. An increasing number of individuals who are currently receiving services are presenting new and challenging demands as they age and require more expensive specialized care and support. Static base funding spanning the last decade has virtually ensured that agencies' resources are insufficient to safely sustain current commitment levels.

Labour organizations representing the majority of our workforce appear to be moving toward province-wide work stoppages in 2007. Their strategy has its origins in the chronic inability of community employers to pay competitive wages. As a consequence of these wage levels, it will come as no surprise that community agencies are now facing an emerging certainty that they will be unable to either retain or recruit qualified people.

One measure of a "healthy society" is how well it provides for it's most vulnerable and isolated citizens. It could be argued that we could and should have done much better in this regard over the past many years. In this respect we all share responsibility. However, it is a sad reality that the Developmental Services Sector is largely invisible to the majority of citizens. Their ignorance may be attributable to benign neglect. For the rest of us continued underfunding ultimately becomes negligence.

Transformation and Inter-Ministerial Cooperation

OASIS continues its support of the Government's goal to transform the way in which our society provides services to this very vulnerable segment of our citizenry. OASIS would like to assure all MPP'S that we will continue to work collaboratively with all stakeholders, to help create a more equitable, sustainable and responsive service system. While there is some evidence of more effective collaboration between and across Ministries; with an emerging acceptance that serving people with a developmental disability (PDD) must be managed holistically, ministry budgets still tend to be vertically configured rather than showing much evidence that people must be served with a notion of a shared ministerial responsibility. For example, transitions from early childhood to school, from school to adult life and finally, to the status of senior citizenship are often much more challenging for PDD and their families. In particular, for most people with a developmental disability, the transition from school to adulthood is a transition to nothing. Many ministries have a role to play in mitigating the difficulties associated with these transitions.

We hope that you find this summary to be of assistance as you assume or resume your responsibilities within the Legislature and debate issues of social concern to the people of Ontario. We encourage you to obtain details on these matters from the OASIS website at: www.oasisonline.ca

Sincerely,
George Braithwaite, President

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