



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

May 2002

Dear Member of the Ontario Legislature:

As part of OASIS's ongoing efforts to communicate issues of importance for our 86 member agencies, we have prepared this Information Bulletin for the Spring Session of the Legislature, briefly outlining current topics of concern to the Developmental Services sector. OASIS agencies provide service to intellectually handicapped citizens in your riding. We appreciate the positive feedback that we received from MPP's regarding previous issues (October 2000, April 2001, June 2001 & November 2001), and look forward to continuing discussions with both MPP's and the Ministry of Community, Family & Children's Services on these matters.

Funding Commitments in Last Ontario Budget

Last year's budget announcement of \$197 million over 5 years will be crucial to maintain for the ongoing viability of the Developmental Services sector, and we would ask that you act to ensure that this commitment is kept. OASIS member agencies publicly thanked the previous Ministers of both Community and Social Services and Finance for their recognition that it is up to government to ensure vulnerable people in our society have support, and for the statement that it is a priority of this Government to care for the vulnerable. The Budget Speech correctly identified the challenges facing many parents of developmentally disabled children, and we view that announcement as an endorsement of the importance of valuing the services provided.

Pay Equity

Local agencies continue to face the legal requirement of making Pay Equity adjustments each year with no specific funding from MCFCS for this expense. This means that some agencies are continuing to accumulate unfunded liabilities that they are unable to pay until they obtain government funding. OASIS recently completed a survey on Pay Equity obligations for their member agencies. The results indicate that over 85% of developmental services agencies in the province have unfunded Pay Equity obligations, averaging over \$870,000 per agency. The crisis is so severe, that even with full government funding the majority of agencies in the sector would not reach full Pay Equity until 2025.

Two legal challenges continue in Ontario with respect to this matter: Three developmental service agencies have appealed their Pay Equity Orders to the Pay Equity Commission; and the second challenge consists of a Charter Challenge by The Equal Pay Coalition. Both of these matters are expected to proceed in 2002. OASIS hopes that the issue of government responsibility for funding these legal obligations will be resolved as a result of these actions.

Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) Public Consultations

OASIS responded to the recent provincial public consultations by WSIB regarding potential changes to coverage in the province. The concerns of member agencies are twofold. First, the possible requirement to have all employers provide workplace insurance through WSIB will lead to further financial increases in operating costs for agencies that are currently providing private insurance coverage. Secondly, the possible requirement to provide WSIB coverage for all volunteers in organizations throughout the province will be financially devastating for the voluntary and charitable sectors. Agencies in the developmental services sector rely heavily on volunteers to provide their services. We encourage you to review the full submission, which can be accessed from the OASIS website at: www.oasonline.ca, and act to ensure that these options are not accepted by WSIB.

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

Sincerely,
Paul Wilson, President
