



December 7, 2004

Ms Myra Wiener
Director, Developmental Services Branch
Ministry of Community and Social Services
56 Wellesley Avenue West, 12th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
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Dear Ms Wiener:

RE: Transforming Services in Ontario for people who have a Developmental Disability – Preliminary Discussion Paper

Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, for this opportunity to respond to the October 2004 Preliminary Discussion Paper.

We applaud the Ministry's commitment to transforming services in Ontario for people who have a developmental disability, in a way that will ensure fair, accessible and sustainable services well into the future.

The attached document is a summary of the discussions that have taken place at the Community Services Coordination Network, relative to the Preliminary Discussion Paper. This document represents the collective response of our Service Coordination Team at CSCN, to the Discussion Paper.

Should you have questions or require clarification, please do not hesitate to call or write at your convenience. We look forward to working closely with the Ministry of Community and Social Services as this critically important undertaking unfolds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris J. Symons', with a period at the end.

Chris J. Symons
Manager, Service Coordination
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attachment

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Response To:

Transforming Services in Ontario
for People who have a Developmental Disability

Preliminary Discussion Paper

October 2004

**Transforming Services in Ontario
for People who have a Developmental Disability
Response to – Preliminary Discussion Paper (October 2004)**

1. What should be the roles and responsibilities of different parts of society in supporting individuals who have a developmental disability?

As the focus for change in developmental services in recent years has been influenced by “citizenship”, individuals and families should be supported as they press for increased opportunities to bring this concept into their lives.

For many people, citizenship, as many of us know, has not been their reality and in many instances services/supports which have been developed and provided, reflect an over emphasis on people’s need for safety. This has taken place at the expense of other opportunities for them to be involved in other parts of the community (and vice versa). Many people, as self advocates, continue to champion more individualized approaches to service delivery and they should be supported at a systemic level to do so.

Government and service providers have a role and a responsibility to support increased public awareness and education of more inclusive, individualized approaches. This responsibility includes the need to avoid what may appear to be quick and simple responses (for example: the possible placement of aging individuals, currently in an institution, in Long Term Care facilities) without consideration of viable or more appropriate alternatives. The reform and transformation of legislation and policy should foster “best practice” models that lead to increased citizenship for people with a developmental disability, with a balance of incentives and sanctions that result in improved outcomes for people.

2. What strategies and resources would help individuals receive seamless supports throughout their lives, including points of transition?

Perhaps this question could more appropriately have been posed in the following way:

How should people be supported generally and particularly, at those times in their lives when they go through periods of transition?

People cannot map out their entire lives in a seamless way. Planning for supports and services needs to be an ongoing activity. Plans should not be considered ‘static’ and the planning process needs to be revisited regularly. The result is the provision of available supports, which increase and decrease based on needs, in a way that wraps services around individuals as opposed to people having to fit into a predetermined and limited “menu”.

3. What supports and services that are currently available work well and should be built on for the future?

The most appropriate services are those that increase opportunities for people to be “involved” in inclusive ways in their communities. People need to be aware of EVERY option that might be available to them, not simply those that are presently available where they live.

Options should be built on a “needs” basis and should not over emphasize the ‘group care’ model. Additional discussions should take place about the

perceptions and realities of individualized models, in order to better understand the implications of outcomes, cost, accountability, etc.

The restrictions which “bricks and mortar” place on the service system will contribute to some of the crisis situations of the future and also lessen opportunities for inclusion, involvement and the citizenship that should be goals of transformation.

Build on access mechanisms in order to enhance the broad “system wide” perspective that will better position all of us to understand and respond to individual and systemic needs, trends and expenditures.

4. How should a reasonable level of government funding for an individual be determined?

Accept that there is no easy answer to this question. It requires much more investigation relative to best practices that exist and have been documented in some communities and where outcome based services have become a more integral component of the service system.

This will require training and support at all levels of the system in order to enhance, and in many cases develop, the capacity of a system that has in many examples evolved (with limited change) from a model that merely moved “programs” from facilities/institutions into the community.

5. Services are changing in Ontario for people who have a developmental disability. What would you like to see happen?

See answers #1 through #4. In all aspects of the transformation process, consider the need to shift the elements of power and control FROM providers of service TO individuals and families.

6. What do you think are the priorities the government should address?

Reverse the order of the priorities as they have been presented, that is to say:

- Funding and support for innovation
- Funding for community capacity building
- Creating linkages to other ministries
- Special Services at Home
- Day Supports
- Housing

Develop mechanisms to build accountability of resources to individuals, which, at the same time, will increase the public accountability for resources/expenditures allocated to support individuals who have a developmental disability.

Ensure that these accountability mechanisms include input from, and/or representation of the individuals being served.

