



OASIS

focus

A PUBLICATION OF ONTARIO AGENCIES SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS · FALL 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The latest challenge pushed upon the Developmental Services (DS) sector by The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) is the Increased Community Capacity Initiative (ICCI pronounced 'icky' according to John Bedell).

Once again MCSS corporate brings to our sector an initiative that is based on the assumptions that we are adequately funded but poorly managed and inefficiently run expensive programs. There also seems to be an underlying assumption that people currently receive more support than they need.

"Stretched to the Max?", a study completed by OASIS in 2000, showed how agencies used their resources to provide direct support with minimal administrative expense. In 2005, the Metro Agencies Representative Council (MARC) produced 'Beyond Numbers' a report on the implications of financial restraints and changing needs in developmental services.

Both of these reports identify the financial pressures on the DS sector. Very little has changed for agency funding, yet here we are looking to reduce funding once again or to look at this from the current view 'do more with the same funding'. I don't remember anyone telling agencies and families that Transformation was a zero sum initiative. The Ministry needs to recognize that there is a cost to Transformation or it can't happen.

I think it's time that the Ministry asked families of people currently receiving services how they feel about this dilution of services that they or their loved ones currently receive, because this is, in fact, a dilution of services. Staff ratios may need to be decreased as more people are supported without more funding. Twenty four hour a day supports may be changed to SIL or cluster type programs with less staff and lower levels of support. Families may be asked to pay additional amounts from ODSP for respite and communal living arrangements. I believe that it is time for MCSS to advise families directly of the fall-out of ICCI.

This initiative also assumes that volunteer boards no longer play a part in the sector. The same boards that are required by the legislation to head up not for profit transfer agencies are not given any input into changes in their Service Agreements (numbers to be served) despite the fact that they must sign off on service agreements annually. Between the direct negotiations with OPSEU in 2007 and the attempt this year to make unilateral changes to service agreements with this initiative, I wonder just how much longer volunteer boards will be part of the developmental services landscape?

Brian Young
OASIS President



MUNICIPAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENT CORPORATION (M.P.A.C.)

UPCOMING OASIS BOARD MEETINGS:

December 3-4, 2008
Toronto

January 13-14, 2009
Toronto

February 25-26, 2009
Toronto

FOCUS is published quarterly. Ideas and articles are welcomed. Please contact **Corey Allison** callison@lcds.on.ca

OASIS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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OASIS

To facilitate the sharing of ideas, resources, systems and information, OASIS will liaise with government on behalf of member organizations with the goal of improving the development of cost effective quality supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Legislation and Policy Analyst, Michael Manuel, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (M.P.A.C.) provided an overview to the Provincial Network regarding the history and interpretation of the Assessment Act (Section 3). Section 3.(1)11 of the Act provides a property tax exemption for "land owned, used and occupied by a non-profit, philanthropic corporation for the purpose of a house of refuge, the reformation of offenders, the care of children or a similar purpose or excluding land used for the purpose of a daycare centre".

As it relates to our sector a "group home" means a residence licensed or funded under federal or provincial statute for the accommodation of 3-10 persons, excluding staff, living in a single housekeeping unit and who, by reason of their emotional, mental, social or physical condition or legal status require a group living arrangement for their well being.

M.P.A.C. also applies the exemption for a "house of refuge" to similar residences providing a supportive environment that are not within the definition of a "group home";

i.e., the residence may be occupied by only one or two individuals, rather than by 3 to 10 persons occupying a bedroom each and sharing all other facilities.

A revised questionnaire has been developed for the purpose of obtaining relevant information, and local property assessment offices should be using this questionnaire/form. All exemption requests are reviewed and approved through Legislation and Policy Support Services of M.P.A.C. Applications for property tax exemption should be made to the local M.P.A.C. office where the exemption is claimed for an entire taxation year (Request for Reconsideration). If the exemption is claimed for a partial taxation year (i.e., the non-profit organization purchases a property and commences using it sometime during the year), a section 357 (of the Municipal Act, 2001) application must be submitted to the local municipality.

Homes that meet the eligibility criteria described would qualify for "tax exempt" status. Other properties owned by a non-profit corporation, and used exclusively for the purpose of a "house of refuge" (e.g., administration) may benefit from this exemption, and will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Additional information on specific questions may be obtained from Michael Manuel, Legal and Policy Analyst. Email manuelmi@mpac.ca or by phone at 905-837-6206.

Brian J. Dunne

HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY UPDATE

The following is a brief update on developments that have occurred with regard to the Human Resource Strategy implementation, first highlighted in the Winter 2008 OASIS newsletter.

First of all, I am pleased to announce the recruitment of Ms. Holly Duff to the role of "Project Coordinator," as of July 23, 2008. Holly has been doing an excellent job of coordinating various aspects of the project, resourcing and supporting the Chairs of the various subcommittees. She has also been serving as a liaison to the Hay Group, the consulting firm who has been busy conducting focus groups on "core competencies" across the province.

With regard to the subcommittees that

have been established, all have had their initial meetings and are moving forward with the development of their work plans, with the exception of the Competency-Based Compensation Committee. We have decided to put the work of this committee on hold pending further discussions with CUPE and OPSEU representatives to determine how best to incorporate their perspective, and a meeting for this purpose is scheduled for November 14, 2008.

It is probably safe to say that the majority of the work thus far has been by the core competencies committee and specifically the focus groups to establish competencies for six (6) key positions across the sector. The fifteen focus groups consisting of staff in the various agency roles of Direct

Support Professional, Supervisor, Manager, Director, Executive Director, Specialized Staff and Clinical Staff have now been completed. We were able to host the focus groups in the nine provincial regions through the hospitality of various agencies. The groups reflected the great skill, experience, diversity and commitment to excellence in staff. The participants indicated that the experience provided them with learning and insight to take back to their agencies and that they look forward to seeing the final results.

In working towards a valid set of competencies that reflect the perspective of those we support and are also congruent with the “transforming” sector, the Core Competencies Committee has undertaken further measures to ensure validity. For example, a self-advocates focus group and a family focus group have been added and will be facilitated in early December by the Hay Group to provide further validation of the established Core Competencies from a consumer and family perspective. Also, a targeted selection for the final specialized focus group comprised of clinical staff will help ensure that this important group of professionals are included within the Specialized Staff category.

It is also important that the strategy outcomes are reflective of the diversity in our sector. In order to ensure that this critical element is not overlooked, a statement with regard to diversity has been added to the Terms of Reference for each of the Committees. The Core Competencies Committee also confirmed with the Hay Group that diversity was noted in the focus groups and needs to be reflected in the Core Competencies.

As the Strategy moves forward, the Core Competencies Committee and Steering Committee will be reviewing the draft report from the Hay Group in early December, with the final report being anticipated early in the New Year. The work plans for the Program Standards Committee, the Agency Based Training Committee, Best HR Practices Committee and Awareness and Marketing Committee will be reviewed in early December. It is apparent at this point that the

committees are comprised of a variety of individuals with valuable and diverse experience, skill, knowledge and talent. At this time there is great anticipation for the depth of work that will come from the committees over the next 18 months.

Finally, I am pleased to report that we are in the final stages of negotiating a partnership with Queen’s University with regard to the provincial Human Resource Strategy implementation. Specifically, the Provincial Network Human Resource Subcommittee has been engaged in discussions with Queen’s University with regard to providing much needed research and support to the various subcommittees as well as undertaking with us a comprehensive evaluation of the objectives as specified within the

Human Resource Strategy. In addition, we are hoping to co-sponsor a major international conference focused on human resource challenges, practice issues, research and individualized approaches. Establishing a partnership with a major and well respected university such as Queen’s not only enhances the validity and reliability of the Human Resource Strategy but also serves as the foundation for a lasting and productive partnership between our sector and the world of academia, something that thus far has not formally existed.

If you would like further information with regard to the foregoing update, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Steven A. Finlay, Co-Chair
sfinlay@communitylivingoc.ca

SAVE the DATE

REVITUP!

“REV IT UP!” in Windsor Essex County is the theme for OASIS 2009 and the co-hosts, Community Living Essex County and Community Living Windsor, are eagerly looking forward to welcoming delegates from across Ontario and southeastern Michigan.

The excitement is growing! The location will be the marvelous Caesars Windsor where service is the key, great food is ensured, and excitement is anticipated. Taking advantage of the celebrity talent in the new 5000 seat concert hall (the largest in southwestern Ontario) will be one of the draws, as will the spectacular riverfront view from the luxurious hotel rooms whose high quality matches Caesar’s of Vegas. Of course, the traditional golf tournament has been arranged and plans are underway for partner activities to possibly entice more partners to attend just for the fun.

How about a wine tour in the county or a shopping spree to a prime-store factory outlet.

However, developing a learning conference is the priority and our program committee is finalizing agreements with knowledgeable, interesting presenters. This is a great opportunity for the co-hosts to work together and everyone in Windsor-Essex is enthusiastically bringing the details together and looking forward to the event.

Come Visit Windsor-Essex in 2009!

OASIS
 (Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs)
www.oasisonline.ca

Community Living Windsor **519-974-4221**
 Community Living Essex County **519-776-6483**

12TH ANNUAL OASIS CONFERENCE
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