

## TRANSFORMING DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES IN ONTARIO

### OASIS VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### COMMON VISION / UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES / TARGETS

##### OASIS:

- Recommends that the fundamental role and objective of the developmental services system in Ontario be to promote and strengthen the abilities and independence of persons with developmental disabilities, enhance their quality of life and their full inclusion in all aspects of society, and ensure that service and support options, capable of addressing the changing needs of persons with developmental disabilities throughout their lifetimes, and their families, are available to all who require them
- Considers that articulation of a clear and concise new Vision for the developmental services sector (such as that suggested on page 8 of the October 2004 Preliminary Discussion Paper), shared by the Government, the transfer payment agency system and other service providers, and the families and individuals involved, is both timely and necessary
- Recommends that an updated Vision for the sector impart greater clarity to all partners in the developmental services system regarding their respective roles and responsibilities
- Recommends that decisions regarding transformation of the developmental services system be based on, and be guided by, agreed principles. In this regard, OASIS supports the principles proposed by the Partnership Table (as set out on pages 8 through 11 of the October 2004 Preliminary Discussion Paper), in particular that the system needs to be, and be seen to be, fair and equitable including with respect to matching resources for persons with developmental disabilities with their needs and capabilities, and in terms of the funding provided to and among service providers across the province
- Recommends that the Government i) adopt the principle, and introduce legislation that would obligate the Government to ensure, that supports and services are available for persons with developmental disabilities on a “seamless” lifetime basis, i.e., to provide the assurance that a life-long continuum of support and services will be available for persons with developmental disabilities and that such supports and services will be neither age-dependent nor age-specific, and ii) undertake to see this “seamless” approach be fully implemented by the earliest possible agreed date, but no later than 2015

- Recommends that, in view of the central role that transfer payment agencies play in the delivery of quality programs and services across the Province, and the importance of addressing the needs, in particular the funding needs, that such agencies face if they are to be in a position to continue to provide quality programs and services, that the Government use the opportunity provided by the Transformation initiative to address the needs of transfer payment agencies
- Recommends that a new Vision for the developmental services sector establish specific objectives and targets to be achieved as early as possible, but no later than 2015, including those recommended under “Key Points”

## INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY ROLES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### OASIS MEMBERS:

- Consider that persons with developmental disabilities and their families have the right to have a range of high quality support and service options available to them and the assurance that such supports and services will continue to be available, the responsibility to make themselves aware of the supports and services available, and the right to make choices for them
- Consider that persons with developmental disabilities and their families have both the right and the responsibility to take an active and continuing role in planning for their future, and in accessing programs and services appropriate to their needs

## GOVERNMENT ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### OASIS:

- Recommends that the Government accord priority to the developmental services sector in Ontario and, in particular, accept its responsibility to ensure a level of ongoing, multi-year funding sufficient to meet the needs of persons with developmental disabilities in Ontario
- Recommends that the Government, together with its developmental service sector partners, demonstrate leadership and work proactively to ensure that society respects, works with and provides appropriate supports and services for individuals with a developmental disability to meet the changing needs of the population, including the increasing number of seniors
- Recommends that, to properly support and implement a seamless approach to supports and services as recommended under “Key Points”, the Government recognize the need for a “holistic” approach to carrying out its responsibilities for persons with developmental disabilities and the developmental services sector, and take the necessary steps to break down unnecessary internal barriers and achieve more cohesive collaboration and coordination in planning and program development within and among all of the provincial Ministries (e.g., Community

and Social Services, Health and Long Term Care, Education, Children and Youth Services, Housing, Employment, Corrections, Transportation, etc.) whose mandates and programs bear on the nature and quality of supports and services that are or should be available for persons with developmental disabilities

- Recommends that the Government establish, and provide funding for, a vehicle to conduct, commission and disseminate research for the benefit of the developmental services sector, in particular regarding assessment techniques, personal outcome measurement methods (including in both cases quality of life considerations) and best-practice service models for persons with developmental disabilities. The Government should, in this regard, examine models in other sectors (such as the Health Intelligence Units, the JPPC and CIHI, CURA etc.) and build on the results of university research in the area of developmental disabilities
- Recommends that the Government continue its efforts to assist transfer payment agencies in maintaining and strengthening their standards of governance
- Recommends that the Government, in partnership with the sector stakeholders, develop standards of performance for the sector, including quality assurance

## TRANSFER PAYMENT AGENCY ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### OASIS MEMBERS:

- Are committed to continuing to provide innovative and cost-effective programs and services
- Recognize that they, together with their developmental service sector partners, have a responsibility to demonstrate leadership to ensure that society respects and provides appropriate supports and services for individuals with a developmental disability to meet the evolving needs of the population e.g., the increasing number of seniors
- Recognize that they must meet, and wherever possible, exceed prescribed operating, service and other standards established
- Are committed to contributing in a major way to ensuring the availability of an optimum variety, level and quality of programs and services across Ontario, including specialized services
- Agree that OASIS can support stronger internal governance of transfer payment agencies by providing education to its members about best practices
- Consider that better and more easily accessible information needs to be made available to families and individuals to increase their knowledge and awareness of available supports and services, and that the Government, the transfer payment agencies and other partners in the development services sector, in

particular the central point-of-access agencies, all have a major role to play in improving the quality and availability of such information

- Agree that they, together with their partners in the sector, have a major role to play in promoting inclusion and social acceptance of persons with developmental disabilities, and enhancing community capacity

## ACCOUNTABILITY

### OASIS MEMBERS:

- Recognize that the Government is and must remain accountable to the public of Ontario for both the funding provided to the developmental services sector and the results and outcomes achieved
- Recognize that families and service providers, including the transfer payment agencies, are accountable for utilizing public resources in the best and most cost-effective way possible, to maximize the benefit to and the results for, persons with developmental disabilities
- Support formal third-party accountability measures, and recommends that the Government fund the associated costs

## SERVICE SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

### OASIS:

- Recommends that, in support of the principle of “seamless” life-long continuum of appropriate supports and services being available, a “life-long” planning approach be adopted based on the identification of persons with developmental disabilities at the earliest possible stages, the initiation of planning for such persons as rapidly as possible once diagnoses are made, and the review and modification of plans at regular intervals or as needs change during a person’s life
- Recommends that, to achieve a fair, equitable and fiscally responsible system that ensures that available resources are matched, as closely as possible to the initial and evolving requirements of individuals and their families, priority be attached to developing and introducing a sophisticated, independent assessment process which would reflect quality of life as well as physical needs and development considerations
- Recommends that the Government, as a matter of priority and in consultation with its sector partners, examine models and mechanisms for both assessment and individual service planning from across the province and other jurisdictions, including the potential for “third party” planning to improve and facilitate access to and the development of tailored services appropriate to the needs of the individuals concerned, with the aim of introducing consistent province-wide

frameworks for both assessment and individual service planning at the earliest possible date

- Recommends that the Government, in consultation with its partners in the sector, similarly review current service access models and mechanisms within the province and other jurisdictions, with the aim of developing an optimal framework and approach to facilitate, for persons with developmental disabilities and their families, easier access to services
- Acknowledges that families and individuals move within the Province, and supports the concept that individuals with a developmental disability should receive similar supports and services in whichever community they reside. It is recommended that the Government, together with its sector partners, develop a methodology that will address this matter in a proactive and timely manner. Initiatives in this direction will require careful implementation to ensure continuity in community programs
- Recommends that the Government establish, in the context of the Transformation initiative, the goal of a significant reduction in, and preferably the elimination of, waiting lists for supports and services, to be achieved as soon as possible but no later than 2015
- Recommends that funding allocated for respite care and Special Services At Home for families who are primary caregivers be increased, in part to ensure that salaries for such services are comparable to those within the sector and that, in conjunction with this activity, third-party accountability systems consistent with those for other parts of the developmental services sector, be implemented and maintained

## FUNDING MODELS AND SUPPORT

### OASIS:

- Considers that, while individualized funding initiatives have yielded some positive results (including that many families making use of the Special Services at Home Program appreciate having greater control over the choice of services) and that individualized funding support may provide an appropriate model in certain circumstances, it is premature to consider such a funding model as a panacea, or that all persons with developmental disabilities, their families or developmental services providers are in a position to adapt readily to a wholesale change to a comprehensive individualized funding approach
- While supporting further exploration and development of the concept of individualized funding, i.e., individual or family-controlled funds, considers that a number of important issues require clarification, including the extent to which families and individuals in the province are able or inclined to make effective use of such a funding model, what the concept might entail in practical terms, how such a model might be implemented including the level and locus of control of financial resources, whether a guarantee of a specific level of resources for an

individual would be adjustable as needs evolve, whether there would be an appeal mechanism, and whether such an approach would confer an ability to purchase services from a range of providers and to change providers at will, and whether there would be an accountability system for the expenditure of the funds

- Recommends that, in view of the need for further work by all developmental services sector partners on the practical and other issues involved, including ways of mitigating the potential risks of destabilizing the operations of transfer payment agencies, the Government refrain from adopting individualized funding, i.e., individual or family-controlled funds, as the sole or core funding model in the context of the Transformation initiative
- Recommends that, with respect to the funding model for transfer payment agencies and in recognition of the increasing cost pressures that such agencies have faced and will continue to encounter, the Government revamp the funding model in consultation with transfer payment agencies by:
  1. Increasing the base budgets of agencies by 3% effective April 1, 2005, and introducing a formula to ensure adequate ongoing base budget funding and program cost funding. In this regard, OASIS recommends that an indexation formula for all cost pressures that are beyond the control of the transfer payment agencies be adopted. Examples include WSIB premium increases, fuel, utility, food and supply costs, increased costs arising from new legislative and regulatory requirements, and salary and benefit increases. Program costs would include increasing costs associated with meeting the needs of individuals
  2. Incorporating multi-year funding under a revamped model to provide greater stability and predictability for transfer payment agencies and consequently permit improved longer term planning. In OASIS' view, it is unacceptable to consider that a service agency can operate effectively and efficiently when the major part of its funding is on an annual basis, the approval for which is normally only received well into each fiscal year
  3. Providing to transfer payment agencies, subject to agreed accountability and outcome measures, flexibility regarding the utilization of an agreed portion of their financial resources during a particular year
  4. Providing not-for-profit agencies meeting agreed criteria, conditions and limits, with the ability to carry forward funding from one year to the next and to establish funding reserves, including reserves to meet predictable expenses, that are currently not allowable under Ministry regulations
- Recommends that the Government consider the introduction of a supplemental program of financial incentives to support and encourage creativity and innovation in programs and services by providers
- Recommends that the Government, i.e., the Ministry of Community and Social Services, consider establishing and maintaining a funding reserve that would be accessible by transfer payment agencies, subject to agreed criteria, to address

“catastrophic” funding needs circumstances, e.g., where unanticipated “high needs” situations arise or where additional resources prove necessary to ensure client and/or public safety. A funding reserve may also enable a flexible response to emerging program initiatives and proposals that generate cost efficiencies within the sector

- Recommends that, with respect to income support provided through ODSP, that the Government take the necessary steps at an early date to increase the amounts of benefits provided to a minimum level at, or above, the announced ‘poverty line’ within the Province, ensure the automatic indexation of benefits, and that benefits are maintained throughout an individual’s efforts to obtain employment
- Recommends that the Government develop and adopt additional tax measures with all levels of government, which would assist families to provide for their developmentally disabled family member(s) in the future, such as an “RESP” type tax measure which would assist families to save funds on a tax-advantaged basis for the benefit of the individual with a developmental disability

## GOVERNMENT / TRANSFER PAYMENT AGENCY INTERFACE

### OASIS:

- Recommends that, in view of the rigidity that the current funding model imparts to the relationship between transfer payment agencies and the operational arm of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the transfer payment agency budgeting process be redesigned to create a true budget proposal environment, and mechanism that would provide a basis for realistic negotiations between the agencies and the Regional Offices of the Ministry, including a single “agency-based” budget rather than the current model based upon multiple contract revenue streams
- Recommends that, consistent with providing multi-year funding for transfer payment agencies, the Government introduce multi-year (i.e., 3 or 5 year) service contracts for transfer payment agencies that meet agreed criteria
- Recommends that the Government and its partners in the sector jointly develop, with the aim of early adoption, a clear and consistent standards-based approach to its oversight and interaction with transfer payment agencies and other service providers, including the introduction of third-party accountability mechanisms, and that the Government commensurately move away from direct involvement in the operations of individual service providers
- Recommends that, in the context of a standards-based oversight model which respects the need to ensure appropriate ongoing accountability, the Government review, based on a “necessary” test, with the aim of reducing or simplifying, the nature and incidence of reporting requirements, financial and otherwise, imposed on transfer payment agencies

- Recommends that the Government establish a working group, involving its sector partners, to review and make recommendations regarding, possible changes to the current basic Service Contract. The review should aim, among other things, to more clearly delineate the steps, including time periods and appeal mechanisms, associated with actions to remedy or terminate adverse transfer payment agency situations
- Recommends that the Government review its process for decisions regarding funding allocations, and transfer authority to the Regional Offices in order to support a decision-making process which would respond to local community priorities and pressures, rather than imposing service level targets from the Corporate level of MCSS
- Recommends that the Government establish a permanent, high-level consultation vehicle with its partners in the developmental services sector

#### DATA REQUIREMENTS AND AVAILABILITY

##### OASIS:

- Recommends that in support of longer term individual and system planning, while bearing in mind privacy considerations, the Government, in cooperation with its sector partners, attach priority to improving the consistency, collection, coordination, analysis and dissemination of data regarding the developmentally disabled population, including the costs associated with meeting the needs of persons with developmental disabilities, on both a province-wide and community basis. It is further recommended that the Ministry examine the methodology of organizations such as CIHI (Canadian Institute for Health Information) as a model for data collection, based on identifying resources required to deliver the services to meet the needs of the population

#### STAFF DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION / LABOUR RELATIONS

##### OASIS:

- Recommends that the Government, and its partners in the developmental services sector, develop a multi-pronged, long-term strategy to address continuing staffing-related challenges facing the developmental services sector
- Recommends that the strategy address, but not be limited to, the following issues:
  - Based on an assessment of the anticipated future need for qualified graduates (e.g. DSW graduates), means of strengthening dialogue and collaboration with appropriate elements of the education system to ensure that sufficient qualified individuals will be available to meet service delivery requirements

- Ways of transforming employment in the sector to a “Profession of Choice”
  - Ways of addressing ongoing staff training and development requirements
  - Staff recruitment and retention
  - Ways of rectifying salary inequities and disparities that exist within the sector, and between the sector and other comparable sectors
  - Longer term resolution of pay equity and associated benefit costs, and rectification of the service distortions that have arisen in agencies that met their pay equity obligations within established budgets
- Recommends that the Government undertake consultations with its developmental service sector partners on the merits of defining the sector as an “essential service”

## COMMUNITY CAPACITY-BUILDING

### OASIS:

- Recommends that the Government, in light of but not limited to the planned closure of the larger provincial institutions, and in consultation with its partners in the developmental services sector, provide sufficient capital funding to ensure that housing and other related facilities suited to the needs of persons with developmental disabilities are constructed or leased, and maintained, in all parts of the province
- Recommends that the Government explore possible innovative ways of financing ongoing and anticipated future capital requirements, with a view to reducing both the cost to the Government and the financial burden borne by service providers
- Recommends that the Government and all partners in the developmental services sector, individually and collectively, increase their public communication and education efforts concerning the value and contribution of persons with developmental disabilities, and enhance collaboration with community organizations, to ensure that such individuals can avail themselves of opportunities on an equal basis
- Recommends that the Government develop, and in consultation with partners in the developmental services sector and within the context of the Transformation initiative, fund a province-wide strategy, including dedicated staff, to enhance community-based acceptance and inclusion of persons with developmental disabilities
- Recommends that the Government, in consultation with all concerned sector partners, assess the current and anticipated future availability of necessary specialized support services (e.g., medical, dental, psychiatric, behavioural,

therapeutic, etc.) for the developmental service sector across the Province, and adopt measures where necessary, to ensure that adequate and accessible support services are available to meet the needs of persons with developmental disabilities in all parts of Ontario

- Recommends that, recognizing that the availability of community support services for persons with developmental disabilities is limited in many communities, that difficulties are encountered in all parts of the Province in accessing such services, and that there is a need to ensure adequate professional supports for crisis intervention, the Government, among other things, act proactively to avoid the possible dissipation of support services associated with the soon-to-be closed large institutions, and to review and develop models, possibly including centers that would combine needed resources and expertise, to ensure that adequate specialized services are available and accessible on a continuing basis across the Province