

Pandemic Emergency Management – Challenge & Tested Solution

Challenge:

Ineffective/Weak Connections with Ministry of Health – LHNs, Public Health Units, IPAC Hubs

Solution:

Focused engagement and form relationships with LHNs PHU and IPAC hubs

Steps to Implement:

1. Early in Pandemic Ongwanada reached out to the PHU and stayed engaged with them
 - Discussed PPE requirements, etc...
 - Offered to host vaccine clinics for DS sector (locations, admin support, RN staff)
 - Helped the PHU understand developmental services capacity to administer vaccines (Ongwanada has RNs on staff)
2. Engage in vaccine advocacy – Ongwanada reached out to the Chief Medical Officer and provided education about why the DS sector should be included in the vaccine roll-out.

Results

- How effective was this?
 - Once established, relationships proven to be very effective.
- Was this efficient? Was it quick to implement?
 - Like all relationships, building connections takes time, persistence and commitment.
- Would you recommend this to other agencies?
 - Yes, establishing these connections have been extremely beneficial for the DS community in Kingston region.

Additional Considerations:

- The key is building relationships with and helping PHU understand the challenges the DS sector has from a behaviour and medical standpoint.
- Early in pandemic, Ongwanada invited PHU staff to visit Ongwanada residential homes to help them understand the DS environment and the unique medical and behavioural needs of people supported.
- Looking for ways your agency can help your PHU is a good way to start building relationships. Initially Ongwanada provided administrative support to host vaccine clinics and built our relationship from there.
 - Ongwanada acts as IPAC hub and is part of the OHT. This has strengthened our connection with PHU and IPAC champion lead.

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Person Consulted: Alastair Lamb, CEO, Ongwanada

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Lessons learned:

- Despite the fact of a pre-existing relationship, the PHU still required education about the unique needs and requirements of the sector.

Further contact Person:

- Alastair Lamb, CEO, Ongwanada: alamb@ongwanada.com

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