

## **Synopsis of Daily Provincial Network meetings April 14<sup>th</sup> & April 16<sup>th</sup>**

The Provincial Network met twice last week. We continue to look at the overarching issues of the sector and provide a coordinated approach to providing information, resources and collaboration between our networks and government.

### **Our Key Priorities remain:**

- Maintaining staff and morale:
  - Need essential worker status and to be treated like health and LTC staff, including access to childcare.
  - Critical to have access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- Funding to meet the needs due to the pandemic;
- Look several weeks out for potential trends and impacts on people, families and supports;
- Resources for people and families;
- Create and sustain clear channels of communication with MCCSS and the government's Emergency Operations Committee (EOC).

### **Here is some key information and outcomes from these meetings:**

With regular ministry participation on our calls, they continue to hear, ask questions and bring forth our concerns to the Minister, and he in turn, to cabinet.

### **From Government/MCCSS:**

- **If you're a Direct Support Professional and the impacts of COVID-19 make you feel that you need mental health support, you can receive short-term one-to-one teletherapy without charge via the Ontario COVID-19 Mental Health Network. Access is easy. Visit the Request Support page at <https://covid19therapists.com/request-support/>. Fill in the brief form. In the space for healthcare role enter "Direct Support Professional." A few hours after you submit the form, you'll receive an email with the names and email addresses of up to three licensed volunteer therapists. Email the therapist of your choice and they'll get back to you as soon as possible.**

- Further to our request, we are happy to see the extension of emergency childcare being extended to our front-line DSP's as well as priority testing for people and DSP's;
- The ministry is starting to provide weekly stats on confirmed residential and staff outbreaks and is working to further refine the data in order to spot trends/issues and allow for proactive measures to be taken;

#### **Other Issues & Outcomes:**

- We are working with government to update guidelines for the DS sector which should be finalized next week;
- We're working with MCCSS to urgently advocate to allow a family member or support person in medical and hospital settings;
- Continuity of protocols from public health officials re. isolation and use of PPE are still issues;
- Consistent/reliable access to PPE is an ongoing issue;
- Working with staff, unions, partner organizations and government, to address the issue of working for no more than one organization during this time, as the health of both people supported and support staff, is paramount;
- Still working with MCCSS re. flexibility on use of SSAH/Passport funding – need support on this from MCCSS as soon as possible;
- OASIS and Community Living Ontario have been providing valuable webinars, connecting experts to people, families and staff during the current pandemic.
- Shortly, the Provincial Network will be putting out messaging on emerging and best practices within the sector.

Stay strong, Stay Healthy, Stay connected.

The Provincial Network.