

## **Synopsis of Provincial Network meetings May 20<sup>th</sup> and Meeting with Minister Smith on May 22<sup>nd</sup>**

The Provincial Network met once 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:**

- The "Health Portal" is online as a matching area for re-deployment of broader public sector employees i.e. not just from education:  
<https://realxchange.communitylivingsex.org/human-resources-and-policies/#target>  
**Note:** This is a Ministry initiative and will be explained/trained through the regions.
- We've been told the revised (from April 1<sup>st</sup>) guidelines for congregate living will be released imminently.
- The SPPI Committee are due to bring their recommendations to the PN regarding a decision-making matrix for essential visitors in group living environments.

## Other Issues & Outcomes:

- As part of future planning we'll need to look at labour issues re. wage levels, essential status, under-valuing support work, looking at the LTC sector, etc. The OASIS LR Committee can take this and begin to look at these issues;
- There's been some difficulty with mixed messaging and 'no movement' on ability to get tests for people who have been positive and gone the 14 days with no symptoms and willing to come back to work. Ottawa will test. However, Toronto, Durham, York are really having difficulty. Some employees have been off for up to 30 days. Some have received Public Health guidance that it is not necessary to retest and that after the 14 days, people are expected to come back to work. Clarification will be sought;
- Need to consider whether agencies should look at the ordering of PPE that is required as part of maintenance and the re-opening for business. Beyond DS, this will be something that we should start coordinating and ordering. Fabric masks is one of the options on the government websites and we'll need to consider what best practices around ordering/inventory levels will need to be;
- The Provincial Network on Developmental Services and OASIS is pleased to invite you to join the **COVID-19 Data Collection Project**.

The COVID-19 Data Collection Project is an important, collaborative, voluntary effort of developmental services agencies across Ontario to capture, share and analyze COVID-19 statistics including case counts and health status of people receiving services and employees in a non-identifying framework.

Originating with the Provincial Network identifying a need for DS Sector specific data regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Provincial Network approached OASIS, and the OBRC (OASIS Business Resource Committee) was asked to take on the development of an efficient and user-friendly data collection and sharing process. Registration can be completed at REAL Xchange by following this [link](#). Non-identifying sector-wide data will be displayed, beginning this week, in a dashboard available publicly at REAL Xchange. In addition, all participating agencies will receive a REAL Xchange login granting them access to their own detailed data, displayed in dashboard format. Participating agencies are provided two options for submitting their data on a weekly basis. Since we know you're very busy right now working to keep people safe amid this pandemic, both are easy to use and don't take much time to complete and submit. Last week OASIS hosted a webinar that walked participants through the tool. To view the recording, [click here](#).

This project's success is dependant on the number of agencies that volunteer to take part. The sector-wide reports, if they are going to be useful, accurate and truly help us to identify immediate needs and trends so that we can best respond and learn, we need as much participation as possible. We are in the midst of something that we've never experienced before and when we're through this, it would be great to be able to look back and have captured an accurate representation of how this pandemic impacted our sector, what we did right, what we could've done better, how we can learn from it, and ultimately, how we collectively strengthen

our sector by using this information to help guide future planning and the reformation of supports. We hope you'll join us.

To register now, click [here](#).

Thank you to the Provincial Network, OASIS, the OBRC group and all involved in this project, who have proven that a big job can be completed in very little time when everyone comes together.

### **Synopsis of Meeting with Minister Todd Smith on Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

Last Friday morning, Minister Smith and his team requested a meeting with members of the Provincial Network and the Presence to Citizenship group, to re-start a discussion that began at a meeting held on March 12<sup>th</sup> at his office.

The Minister acknowledged how the world has changed since then. He and his team wanted to check in with respect to how government resources were deployed, their effectiveness in protecting and supporting people and what some of the key considerations will be as we move towards a phased re-opening.

We shared the need for a reflection on lessons learned, thinking about how we'll need to re-consider how supports and services are provided beyond the current emergency orders. We told him that the next 1 – 2 years will be critical, looking at risk assessments and the resources needed, as well as how this near-term planning should be seen as a bridge to the longer 8 – 10 year reform agenda. Everyone agreed that the change process for some supports e.g. day supports may move much more quickly as a result of the pandemic.

For its part, MCCSS is committed to a process of planned sector reform. They outlined a proposed process of broad engagement. It would include the creation of a reference group and engagement with people who have intellectual/developmental disabilities, Boards, families, and agency staff. This consultation would take place in at least the five regions of the province over the Summer and through the Fall.

Overall, the tone was very positive. Everyone committed to a partnership, working towards a gradual, but sweeping reform of the sector that will put people and families at the centre, providing supports to create ordinary lives, lived as contributing members of their communities.

Stay strong, Stay Healthy, Stay connected.

The Provincial Network.