

THE ADVOCATE



Government Affairs Advisory

A Publication of March of Dimes Canada

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Glen Murray, MPP Toronto Centre, engages 3-year-old Ian Kee, a Conductive Education participant, during the reception for Conductive Education Awareness Day at Queen's Park in April

Conductive Education® Awareness Day at Queen's Park – April 28th

The following is a reprint from a blog written on the web site, "Conductive World." Andrew Sutton is the blogger who writes about news and issues affecting Conductive Education worldwide on this web site he created and maintains. It underlines the significance of our recent Conductive Education Awareness Day at Queen's Park. To explore "Conductive World," go to www.conductive-world.info/



By Andrew Sutton

CONDUCTIVE WORLD



It is some time now since the general North American Awareness event in February but one specific happening had to be held over because the Ontario Legislature was prorogued until April. Well worth doing, in order to raise awareness of Conductive Education among legislators, political aides, and policy makers.

Toronto-Centre MPP (and former Mayor of Winnipeg), Glen Murray sponsored a March of Dimes Conductive Education Awareness Day in the Ontario Legislature in Queen's Park, Toronto, with threading of a Member's Statement, recorded in Hansard, and a reception/town hall in the Legislative Dining Room at Queen's Park for service-users, MOD staff and MPPs.

This is what Mr. Murray read out.

MARCH OF DIMES

Mr. Glen R. Murray: *I would like to welcome to the Legislature, from the March of Dimes, organization up to my left, Jerry Lucas, Gail Mores, Brent Page, Donna Mackay, Steven Christianson, Janet Macmaster and many members of the Conductive education program.*

I am proud to rise in the Legislature today to recognize and give my heartfelt thanks to the participants, families, caregivers and staff members from the March of Dimes conductive education program. Members may not know that conductive education is a unique teaching system that maximizes the independence and mobility of children and adults with neuromotor disabilities, like stroke, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, acquired brain injuries and Parkinson's disease.

Conductive education takes advantage of the brain's neuroplasticity: the lifelong ability of the brain to reorganize neuro-pathways based on new experiences. So no matter how severe the disability, people can learn and improve when they are motivated.

Conductive education has the potential to make a significant life-changing impact on the mobility and independence of close to nine million people in North America, and is operated from the offices of our very own March of Dimes, an organization that has been helping improve the lives and livelihoods of Ontarians with disabilities for nearly 60 years. Conductive education helps individuals learn their way to greater independence.

I hope the House will join me in congratulating our guests from the March of Dimes for their commitment to inclusion and accessibility. I ask all members to support the March of Dimes' conductive education awareness day.

Continued on page 3



The Statement was carried live on the Ontario Legislative Channel and a copy will go up on the March of Dimes website.

Those who called in on the reception included two Ministers (Health and Long-Term Care, and Children and Youth Services). A formal commitment has been made by Glen Murray and the Minister of Health, Deb Matthews, to meet during the summer recess and discuss further opportunities around Conductive Education. March of Dimes Canada is committed to getting Conductive Education on to as many political agendas as possible. It intends to make such a day an annual event in Ontario and is planning a similar event for the Legislative Assembly in Nova Scotia in October.

Sutton, A. (2010) North American Awareness: March of Dimes is more than Tail-End Charlie, *Conductive World*, 12 May

Conductive World is an independent, free-of-charge international ezine for Conductive Education: www.conductive-world-inf

Why we want Queen's Park to notice

By Tina Marano

The significance of the discussion of the Conductive Education program at Queen's Park was to raise awareness of this unique rehabilitation program so that all members of the provincial legislature could realize its uniqueness and become aware of its funding needs. Sometimes prospective clients cannot afford Conductive Education.

The more knowledgeable MPPs are about the program, the more likely they are to include it in future legislation. Currently, to enroll in Conductive Education registrants must provide a deposit fee. Many families cannot afford it. Government assistance could really fill the gap here. This program motivates people with physical disabilities to be mobile and independent. With proper funding, Conductive Education could positively affect the lives of over 9 million North Americans.

Tina Marano is a Ryerson field placement student working at Government Relations and Advocacy at March of Dimes.



Government Relations & Advocacy Report on 2009-2010 Highlights

The second edition of The Advocate in 2009 described our work at that time as the Summer of Consultation. Indeed, from the spring of 2009 to the spring of 2010, March of Dimes was involved in more government consultations, committee work, task force reviews and Ministerial roundtables than at any time in the past decade.

This is even more notable given that upwards of three quarters of these initiatives were at the request of government officials and Cabinet Ministers. Furthermore, our presentations and submissions expanded beyond Ontario, with a major paper submitted to the Government of Manitoba, coalition work with organizations in BC, and a Ministerial roundtable with federal Cabinet Ministers and UN officials for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We strengthened our national focus on a legislative framework that includes caregiver support, supportive and affordable housing, and a national approach to home modifications through March of Dimes' presentations to the federal Standing Committee on Finance (pre-budget consultations) and the Federal Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (poverty reduction consultations).

Other committee and task force work

in and outside of Ontario included the following: Ministerial roundtables on affordable housing, Ontario Caregiving Coalition, Law Commission of Ontario, poverty reduction in Ontario, accessibility of Ontario's electoral system, the budgetary roundtables of the Minister of Finance, federal measures to reform the laws that govern the non-profit and charitable sector, CRTC measures to increase accessibility in Canada's broadcast media, charitable and other tax measures through the Canada Revenue Agency, multiple sessions and briefings related to the AODA (including the AODA Review process chaired by Charles Beer), and the commencement of a motion at the City of Toronto's Disability Issues Committee to examine the possibility of a reduced fare structure for ODSP recipients.

Some of the work was even covered in the media, notably two articles in the Toronto Star.

These last several months also – for the first time in Ontario -- saw March of Dimes' Conductive Education program enter the permanent and official record of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario through the Queens' Park Conductive Education Awareness Day. The day was hosted by Toronto-Centre MPP, Glen Murray, who recognized the program and hosted the day, which included one-on-one interaction between CE consumers and several elected representatives/staff, including Hon. Laurel Broten, Minister of Children and Youth Services, and Hon. Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Consistent with news coverage



in today's age, the event was covered and given a glowing review in the Internet Blog, Conductive World.

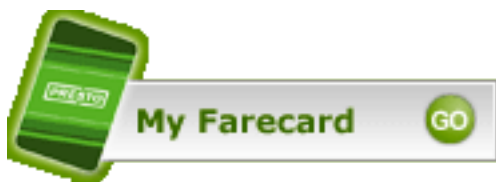
Government Relations & Advocacy also contributed significantly to the newly formed initiative, Inclusive Emergency Preparedness Canada to produce training tools and build multi-sector support towards the goal of ensuring that Ontario's emergency preparedness procedures and organizations can be compliant with the AODA's Customer Service Standard – and ensure that people with a variety of disabilities can be accommodated with dignity and respect during an emergency or natural disaster.



Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Deb Matthews, listens and learns about Conductive Education.

Finally, on the AODA front, the work of March of Dimes' AODA Compliance Committee ensured that our organization would immediately begin complying with the Customer Service Standard through the development of a Statement of Commitment, policies, practices and procedures, and a comprehensive training and reporting system – a full two years prior to our sector's required compliance date.

McGuinty Government Rolls Out Ontario's First-Ever Regional Fare Card



The new PRESTO fare card will change the way commuters pay for transit across the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton.

PRESTO allows commuters to travel between multiple transit systems using a single card. Users load it up with a dollar amount and “tap on” when boarding a bus or train. The fare is automatically deducted from the card. This eliminates the need for exact change, tickets or transfers to get on a bus, GO train or subway. March of Dimes was part of the planning discussions for the PRESTO fare card, to ensure maximum usability for persons with disabilities.

Tap onto Transit

PRESTO is being rolled out to commuters in stages starting with Oakville and Burlington transit systems, Oakville and Union GO stations and seven downtown TTC subway stations.



2010 Federal Budget Revealed

House of Commons - Ottawa

The March 4th, 2010 Federal Budget, delivered 24 hours after the Speech from the Throne, by Hon. Jim Flaherty, PC, MP, Minister of Finance, expands on the Harper government's priorities of jobs, economic growth and deficit elimination.

Delegates in the budget-day lock-up had many questions. How much of the government's focus on jobs, economic growth and tackling the deficit are addressed through a favoured Conservative tool, namely the tax system? How many of the recommendations offered during the Pre-Budget hearings from disability organizations and related charities are incorporated in this budget? Does this budget begin to effectively tackle the challenges associated with Canada's aging demographic and what some policy observers describe as a potential healthcare crisis?

These answers will emerge in the coming months.

Here are a few highlights:

- \$17.6 billion in spending restraint
- aggressive review of programs leading to \$6.8 billion savings over 5 years
- freeze on EI premiums to the end of 2010
- raising the personal tax exemption
- a total of \$3.2 billion in personal income tax cuts
- \$7.7 billion in stimulus funding
- \$4 billion in EI training and related benefits

- improvements to the RDSP that will allow greater flexibility in contributions
- \$45 million over 3 years to the Enabling Accessibility Fund
- \$10 million for the New Horizons for Seniors to support projects that focus on volunteering among seniors.
- comprehensive review of the retirement income system, considering policy options and intergovernmental cooperation
- Canada will be the first G-20 nation to become a tariff-free zone for manufacturers
- proposes to eliminate all disbursement quota requirements except those related to the requirements to annually disperse a minimum amount of investments and other assets not used directly in a charity's operations ... providing charities with greater ability to maintain reserves.

Ontario's 2010 "Hold the Line" Budget

The March 25th, 2010 Budget, delivered by Hon. Dwight Duncan, MPP, Minister of Finance, outlines the main pillars of the Open Ontario plan, announced during the 2010 Speech from the Throne.

Much as with the Speech, we are not seeing much forward movement in terms of groundbreaking, new programs, but more of a "hold the line" Budget. In other words, while the Budget proposes to hold ground, we're not seeing massive retraction.



Aerial view of Queen's Park - Toronto.

As one Finance official explained, "We're not winning much, but at least we're not losing." The bulk of the Budget represents a continuation of existing measures.

The two priority areas of the 2010 Budget are postsecondary education and northern Ontario. Here we see new spending and new programs.

The Budget proposes to add 20,000 new student spaces in colleges in universities. The plan also proposes to create a three-year, \$150 million-a-year Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program that would reduce prices for Northerners by about 25 percent. This Budget also would establish a permanent Northern Ontario Energy Credit.

As rumoured over the past several months, full-day learning will be introduced in September 2010 for 4 and 5 year olds.

On the restraint side, Budget 2010 will freeze compensation structures in the broader public sector and the OPS for all non-bargained

employees for 2 years. The legislation required to effect such a measure would apply to virtually all organizations covered by the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, except municipalities.

The government proposes to also work with transfer partners and bargaining agents to seek agreements of at least two years' duration in an attempt to manage spending pressures. While current and existing agreements will be honoured, transfer service agencies have to plan for a freeze on base operating expenses for new agreements.

The aim is to hold the annual growth in program expense to an average of 1.9 percent beyond 2012-13. This will be accompanied by what will become an ongoing comprehensive review of government programs and services.

This Budget aims to reduce child poverty by 25 per cent over 5 years, moving 90,000 children out of poverty by 2013. A total of \$63.5 million will replace the discontinued federal funding in annual child care, thereby keeping 8,500 children in funded child care.

We will see an increase of adult basic-needs allowances and maximum shelter allowances by 1 percent for people on ODSP and Ontario Works. Municipalities would not be required to contribute to the rate increase until January 2011. Herein is one of the items that shows a degree of retraction -- considering that the Budget identifies inflation at 1.5%, and also projects higher oil prices and higher interest rates. A 1 percent increase is, most would agree, rather pitiful; however, this at least represents something -- several years went by prior to 2003 without any increases.



As a result of last fall's report from the Auditor General, the government plans to create a new nutritional supplement program that would be administered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on behalf of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. In relatively short order, gone will be the Special Diet Allowance. The new program would be medically based and is intended to help those with severe medical needs who are on social assistance. The transition from the existing Special Diet Allowance program to the new supplement program would occur over the next few months.

The minimum wage rose to \$10.25 per hour as of March 31, 2010. This measure is a continuation of a previously announced plan for annual increases.

New learning initiatives will be introduced. There will be a the new Ontario Online Institute which will bring what is described as "the best professors from Ontario's postsecondary institutions into the homes of those who want to pursue higher learning." While a great-sounding idea, details are yet to come.

There will be a continuation of the Second Career Strategy, assisting an additional 30,000 unemployed workers.

An additional \$39 million will be invested in the Summer Jobs program. The Budget gives life to the federal-provincial Targeted Initiative for Older Workers, which serves workers aged 55 to 64 living in communities of fewer than 250,000 people.

The budget also commits to continuing workplace-based pilots for literacy training.

Interestingly, the Government will be partnering with Sudbury and Thunder Bay to establish pilot economic development planning areas.

The plan calls for a cut of personal income tax for 93% of income tax payers, eliminating 90,000 people with lower incomes from the tax rolls.

Not surprisingly, Budget 2010 proposes several tax measures, although most of which represent a continuation of existing measures. We will see the implementation of 3 sales tax transition benefit payments to eligible recipients. These are designed to help offset the transition to the HST. Once legislation is approved, the government plans to introduce changes to the statutes governing the drug system to help facilitate lower generic drug prices.

All other announcements in the 2010 Speech from the Throne, such as making health care providers and executives more accountable, find life in this Budget.

We will see the creation of a new web portal to help centralize access to program information and client services, as well as implement an automated income verification process for those relevant benefit programs. A consultation will soon be announced to work with key service delivery providers to determine new ways to improve and simplify client access.

A technical measure will benefit registered charities. A number of regulatory amendments will be proposed to exempt certain transfers of land by registered charities from land



transfer tax for transfers after March 25, 2010. Transfers of land from trustees to a non-share capital corporation or from one non-share capital corporation to another, would be exempt under the following conditions:

the non-share capital corporation will be continuing the same charitable purpose for the same members, no consideration is paid.

What is absent from this Budget? One could say that massive cuts and restraint measures are absent, and such a “hold the line” approach represents somewhat of a sigh of relief for many in the social and charitable sectors. This, in fact, represented the main theme of our submissions to the Minister of Finance during the pre-budget consultations during the fall of 2009: at least hold the line, which is better than cuts and elimination.

On the other hand, we have many areas that urgently require attention, areas of public policy that, year after year, go , These areas are absent. Consider that Budget 2010 proposes no new spending or additional spending for social, affordable and supportive housing. Consider that Ontario’s most economically vulnerable, living on income assistance such as ODSP, are seeing an increase in basic rates that will actually be offset by inflation and cost of living increases.

A possible “saving grace” in such absent areas looks toward the pending release of the Affordable Housing Strategy and

the forthcoming recommendations from the Social Service Assistance Review (recently initiated). We expect bold and innovative recommendations through these initiatives - which suggests that 2011 may just be the year for fresh ideas, program announcements and new spending.

Next year, 2011, is also an election year.





Cutting Special Diet Allowance has Serious Repercussions

A policy brief by student intern, Tina Marano

Recently, the Ontario government released the 2010 Provincial Budget that indicated they were cutting the Special Diet Allowance for individuals on welfare or disability benefits and will replace this program with a nutritional supplement program that has yet to be determined. This program was created to ensure that people with lower incomes can afford to buy healthy foods that help meet special nutritional requirements, such as those for high blood pressure or diabetes. Cutting this program threatens the health of these individuals by restricting the amount of fresh produce and vital foods they require. With an increased awareness in the general public about the importance of proper nutrition, we cannot allow this program to end as it is critical to the health of so many people living below the poverty line.

The Special Diet Allowance is a special program given to Canadian citizens who are currently receiving and/or are eligible for Social Assistance benefits. According to the Toronto Sun, over 97,000 individuals who are on welfare and 39,000 on disability benefits rely on this program to assist them in making healthy food choices. They receive an extra \$250 per month to buy food that meets special nutritional requirements.

The auditor general suggested the reason for the cutbacks was due to abuse of the

food allowance program. He found that 8 to 10 people in one family were receiving the \$250 per month as they diagnosed with the same medical condition. Some families receive up to \$30,000 a year from diet allowances. Doctors believe that abuse of the system is not the reason behind the increase in costs of the program, but that people are becoming more aware of nutritional requirements and the effects of a healthy diet.

The question that needs to be asked is whether the new program that was suggested is a sufficient replacement for the Special Diet Allowance and, if it is not, how is the Ontario government going to change their policies in order to make up for this loss? Also, is there any room in the budgets of different non-profit organizations to provide assistance for the lack of nutritional financial aid for those affected?

Eating fruits and vegetables is a source of good nutrition which can play a role with many factors in our body. For example,



eating fresh fish once or twice weekly is a good source of protein, drinking fresh milk is a good source of calcium which is very important to maintain



healthy bones and teeth. Canada's Food Guide recommends that a certain number of servings of every food group is essential to a healthy diet. Without access to the program, many individuals will not be able to afford the food recommended by the Food Guide.

Given the amount from the Social Assistance benefits (\$730 per month), most recipients live independently and are responsible for paying rent and living expenses. Without the Special Diet Allowance there will not be enough money to buy fresh fruits and vegetables each week. The food banks do not supply fresh fruits and vegetables; they supply canned goods such as, soups, beans, and tuna. These foods are loaded with sodium and unnecessary fats. Food that is in boxes, such as cookies, crackers and Melba toast, do not have the nutritional values we require on a daily basis.

The cost for a visit to a dietician is prohibitive for those who are on the ODSP benefit allowance. Recently, I investigated this issue and discovered that ODSP will pay for a dietician visit only if someone is being diagnosed with diabetes, but those who have been diagnosed with high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol are not included in the budget plan.

Currently, the program costs the government approximately \$250 million a year, with a projected cost reaching \$750 million by 2015-16. The government feels that nutritional supplements are the least costly to the taxpayer. They indicate that while nobody will be cut off of this assistance before the next program is in place, not everyone will meet the requirements of receiving the nutritional supplement program.

Eliminating this program may save the government money now; however, as these people age, their health problems will increase in severity and the end result will be a higher public health cost. This allowance is a preventative plan that promotes health today as opposed to being very sick in later years and costing the public health system a lot more.

The Stop Community Food Centre has suggested that effective immediately, all adults on social assistance receive \$100 per month for healthy food supplements. They also suggest that the government develop a rate-based plan that determines the amount of money an individual gets as a food allowance depending on the area they live in and the associated cost of living.

The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty has requested the restoration of the Special Diet Allowance as well as a 40% increase in welfare and disability rates. They strongly urge the government to reconsider the budget cuts, as this is only the third time in history that the Ontario government has decreased the income of those on social assistance.

By weighing the costs against the immediate health benefits connected to the Special Diet Allowance, it is clear that people on disability and welfare benefits must be considered with extreme care. The cost of living continues to climb steadily. We will continue to monitor this issue to ensure that Ontario's most vulnerable do not become even more vulnerable.



UN Disability Treaty: A Precursor to National Disability Legislation? Editorial

Ratifications

Countries that have ratified the Convention

- **Algeria** - 4 December 2009
- **Argentina** - 2 September 2008
- **Australia** - 17 July 2008
- **Austria** - 26 September 2008
- **Azerbaijan** - 28 January 2009
- **Bangladesh** - 30 November 2007
- **Belgium** - 2 July 2009
- **Bolivia** - 16 November 2009
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina** - 12 March 2010
- **Brazil** - 1 August 2008
- **Burkina Faso** - 23 July 2009
- **Canada** - 11 March 2010
- **Chile** - 29 July 2008
- **China** - 1 August 2008
- **Cook Islands** - 8 May 2009
- **Costa Rica** - 1 October 2008
- **Croatia** - 15 August 2007

For a full list go to <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=257>

March 11 of this year came and went, seemingly like any other day. Yet that Thursday will continue to prove to be a day of significance, a day that could change many of the laws, programs and policies of this land.

In New York City at the UN Headquarters, Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This is the first United Nations treaty of the 21st century. Perhaps more significantly, the movement that began nearly ten years ago at the UN Headquarters recognized that no previous or existing UN initiative bound the nations of the world to consider and include the approximately 655 million people with disabilities. The treaty is now international law – and one that binds Canada to its principles.

The treaty was first signed by Canada's Ambassador to the UN in 2007, when it was first presented to the UN Assembly. The interim years between then and now were consumed by consultations among Canada's federal departments (Foreign Affairs and Human Resources and Skills Development, for example), with the Provinces and Territories, as well as aboriginal and disability representatives (including March of Dimes Canada).

By ratifying the Convention, Canada is bound by the tenets of the treaty: our laws and systems of governance are required to promote,



protect and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law.

Conventions and treaties ring of lovely principles and ideals, but without a sober approach to the importance and practicalities of public policy and administration, one would be left with little more than paper, principles and signatures.

Canada is a complicated country, and anything that involves a coordinated approach to governance among the federal government and the territories and provinces – not to mention any potential role for the municipalities, NGOs and First Nations and aboriginal governments/organizations -- will be equally complicated.

It is appropriate, necessary in fact, to survey Canada's jurisdictions and ensure administrative effectiveness. This reality alone constitutes sufficient explanation to the critical question, "Why did it take Canada three years to ratify the Convention?" Should we have signed without knowing how to properly administer and uphold the principles of the treaty? Appropriate action was taken, and we are now at an interesting juncture.

Now that we are bound by the treaty, what are the next steps? Where do we go from here? Do we simply sit around the kitchen table and congratulate each other for having signed the treaty?

The first thing that comes to one's mind is the ongoing debate over National Disability

legislation. Some want it; others will fight tooth and nail against it. As a policy, the Conservative Party holds to the principle of developing and introducing a National Disability Act. The NDP also stand firmly in agreement on the need for a national framework (theirs would be called a Canadians with Disabilities Act).

But if we have the UN treaty, the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, and the Canadian Human Rights Code, do we really need additional laws?

One approach to addressing that question is via litigation. Court challenges and decisions will instruct legislators and significantly help construct the parameters of policy. We saw this happen through the years of same-sex and gay rights court decisions. However, as ultimately effective as this approach can be, it is costly and is years in the making. Moreover, this approach diminishes the role of a pro-active parliament, implying a stronger, more important role for the courts.

Another approach to the question, "do we really need additional laws," could look to the framework for healthcare in Canada. We could be envisioning something that is co-funded, provincially administered, and guided by a national framework known as the Canada Health Act -- a complicated path to be sure, but one that could ultimately prove more effective in its policy efficacy and administrative sustainability.



Let us consider.

We have an AODA in Ontario. We know that other Provinces, notably Manitoba and Quebec, are considering whether or not such an AODA-type framework might be suitable in their jurisdictions. Why not convene a national dialogue around employing provincial jurisdiction to administer AODA-type laws, but guided and co-funded around defined measures of service through a national act that, like the Canada Health Act, contains conditions for funding and defined parameters of administrative coordination?

Why not?

Our approach for many years has promoted national disability legislation. Recently, we made national headlines in that quest (re. Warren's World). Our approach substantively encourages a dialogue around such basic issues as a nationally coordinated framework for home modifications, attendant care and supportive housing. Many other countries are well ahead of Canada when it comes to programs, services and planning for the future on this front. Which is ironic, considering that these issues not only build an inclusive society for Canadians with disabilities, they help meet the increasing needs of Canada's aging demographic.

Some might say that assembling a national dialogue on these issues is a "no-brainer". Well, it should be.

All of us, at some point, to some degree, will require services like caregivers, home modifications or supportive housing. And make no mistake: these are not election issues.

These are non-partisan issues that affect all Canadians, policy issues that can be – and should be – considered immediately.

Canada's ratification of the UN treaty on March 11 might just be the catalyst to make that happen.

This is an ongoing series of articles that will be featured in The Advocate. SC May 12, 2010

Queen's Park - Toronto

Ontario government introduces new rules for non-profits: Bill 65, an Act to revise the law in respect to non-profit corporations

After two and a half years of consultation and stakeholder sessions, and three comprehensive policy papers prepared and submitted by March of Dimes, as well as those from other non-for-profit organizations in Ontario, the provincial government has introduced the proposed legislation to reform Ontario's governance of not-for-profits.



Legislative reflections

The Honourable Sofia Aggelonitis, Minister of Consumer Affairs, introduced the proposed act, intended to modernize and strengthen Ontario's non-for-profit sector.

Today's Bill represents the first overhaul of the legislation since the 1950s -- a time when the non-profit sector was measurably different.



Among other aims, the new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, if passed, would do the following:

- simplify the incorporation process and lessen fees through online reporting options
- strengthens accountability
- protects officers and directors with greater protections
- new measures to help stimulate commercial activities for non-profits

The proposed legislation echoes much of the sector's feedback to the Ministry. For further reading of March of Dimes' three submissions on this legislation, please visit www.marchofdimes.ca/advocacy.

National Access Awareness Week

May 30th to June 5th, 2010: Why we celebrate

National Access Awareness Week began in 1988 to honour Rick Hansen. In 1985, he began a two-year, 40,000-kilometre trek through 34 countries in his wheelchair to raise awareness about the need for accessibility for people with disabilities. Since then, communities across Canada have continued Hansen's mission during the last week of May.

National Access Awareness Week promotes access for people with all disabilities, who encounter barriers that prevent

them from participating in day-to-day activities.

The range of barriers includes:

- Physical barriers that result from a building's or structure's design
- Communication barriers that make it difficult for people to understand information
- Technology - or lack of it - that prevent people from accessing information
- Systemic barriers that restrict people through practices and rules
- Attitudinal barriers that result in a person being discriminated against or stereotyped

Some examples of common barriers include:

- Narrow entrances that a wheelchair can't fit through
- Small text in a menu that someone who is visually impaired can't read
- A movie that does not have captioning for someone who is hearing impaired
- Service animals that are not permitted

Better accessibility is good for Ontario's economy. According to the Royal Bank of Canada, people with disabilities have an estimated spending power of about \$25 billion annually across Canada. Better accessibility will also help build a better society. Ontario is a diverse province, where people have diverse abilities. An accessible province will allow everyone to participate.



Regardless of ability, accessibility is good for everyone - from the athlete hauling a hockey bag to an arena, to the delivery person trying to find their destination on a sign, to a mom struggling to get her stroller on a bus. By making an accessible society, we make an inclusive society where we all benefit.

AODA Update

In celebration of National Access Awareness Week, the Hon. Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services, opened the afternoon session in the Ontario Legislature on May 31st with a proclamation declaring National Access Awareness Week, a Ministry report recognizing the 5th anniversary of the AODA, and the tabling of the AODA Review Report (the task force that was chaired by Charles Beer last fall).

The full AODA Review Report is available in the Ministry's website at the following link: http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/publications/accessibility/charles_beer/tableOfContents.aspx. The Report suggests very practical and responsive recommendations to improve the AODA – including a recommendation highlighted from the Submission by March of Dimes (see Page 18).

As well, March of Dimes was recognized in the ceremony at Queen's Park by the Minister along with many other representatives of the disability sector, the Ministry and the ADO, broader public sector entities (like the TTC), and private



Madeleine Meilleur

Minister of Community and Social Services

sector companies. The Annual Report of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, also highlights our recent work through Inclusive Emergency Preparedness Canada (http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/publications/accessibility/aodareport2009/toc_aoda2009.aspx).

As part of the official Queen's Park celebration, Minister Meilleur provided an update on the pending AODA Standards. Employment, Transportation and Info/Comm will be bundled as one harmonized regulation. ETA is early 2011. The Built Environment Standard will follow (details to come).



CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION AWARENESS DAY AT QUEEN'S PARK – APRIL 28TH, 2010



All attendees get an historic photo together in the famous foyer of the Main Legislative Building.



March of Dimes participants enjoy the mock Legislature before experiencing the real thing.

Photos: José Scalabrini



Tina Marano and Renée answer questions at the reception.



March of Dimes manager, Brent Page, with six "conductors" at Legislative Dining Room.

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Make Toronto Yours...

Focus on the issues that matter most to people with disabilities!

Toronto Mayoral Candidates' Meeting

Giorgio Mammoliti
Joe Pantalone
Rocco Rossi
George Smitherman
Sarah Thomson

Moderator:
Steve Paikin

Tuesday, June 29, 2010, 6-8pm

Innis College Town Hall
2 Sussex Ave., Toronto
(U of T Campus)

RSVP to this event!

Space is limited. RSVPs will be taken on a first-come-first-serve basis. Wheelchair seating is available but limited. Please RSVP early.

Hosted by:



In partnership with:



For more info or to RSVP contact kbell@cltoronto.ca

To ensure broad representation, we are asking only one person per family attend. The meeting is open to families, people with disabilities, staff and volunteers.

Make Toronto Yours. Focus on the issues that matter most to people with disabilities by attending a Toronto Mayoral Candidates Meeting:

Tuesday, June 29, 2010
6-8pm
Innis College Town Hall, @ Sussex Avenue

Moderated by TV Ontario's Steve Paikin and attended by:

Giorgio Mammoliti, Joe Pantalone, Rocco Rossi, George Smitherman and Sarah Thomson.

To attend you must RSVP to this event as seating is limited. Contact Karen Bell at kbell@cltoronto.ca or 416-968-0650, ext. 2299.

The event is hosted by Community Living Toronto in partnership with:
Bloorview Kids Rehab
CNIB
Community Living Ontario
March of Dimes Canada
Surrey Place Centre