

THE ADVOCATE



Government Affairs Advisory

A Publication of March of Dimes Canada

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Aerial view of current construction of the Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games' Athletes' Village located in the West Donlands in the newly-named Canary District.

Pan Am Update by Jerry Lucas

In the summer of 2015, Toronto will host the Pan Am Games, one of the largest international sporting events in the world, with 11,000 athletes, the largest ever held in Ontario. Following these games, as with the Olympics, is the Parapan Am Games, featuring disabled athletes from the same competing countries. As a result, all facilities, including the athlete's village, must be fully accessible.

The Games athletic venues will be held at the CNE and across Toronto and the GTA, while the athlete's village, where they will reside, is just east of the Distillery District, south of Eastern Avenue at the mouth of the Don River. Wisely, the games funding partners, the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto, have planned for the legacy that the village will offer and are using it to create a new neighbourhood, the Canary District, which will kick start the development of the larger Donlands community, stretching to Lake Ontario. At the end of the process, approximately 30,000 people will live and work in this newly developed section of Toronto.



For people with disabilities, the athlete's village will create new opportunities for inclusion. The village will include a fully accessible YMCA, a 257-unit George Brown College (GBC) dormitory, including units which are accessible and provide support services.

The village also offers March of Dimes an opportunity to expand our programs. Wigwamen, an aboriginal non-profit housing provider, was the winning bidder to provide housing with March of Dimes as a service partner. Over the past year, we have been advising the architects and developers on building and site accessibility. We hope to provide 24/7 attendant services to 30 consumers in the building on the north side of Front Street. In addition, we are discussing extending these services to disabled students living in the George Brown College dormitory next door. We are also pursuing

business ventures with the GBC centre for entrepreneurship. The new building, just three blocks south of Meynell House, a congregate living program, provides a venue for future service growth opportunities as the community continues to grow and resident needs arise. The new service is scheduled to begin in April, 2016.

"Through our partnership with Wigwamen Community Housing, we are thrilled to be able to provide attendant care to new residents with disabilities, in line with March of Dimes' commitment to offer opportunities for independence to the people we serve," Mr. Lucas continues.

An additional 100 units under construction will be made available for affordable ownership in the heart of what will be known as The Canary District.

Ontario Building Code

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing recently conducted a public consultation on the potential updates to accessibility requirements in the Ontario Building Code. These updates were taken from the most recent version of the draft AODA Built Environment Standard.

The following link takes you to the Public Consultation document. Although the consultation is now officially over, we still invite you to review the proposed amendments to see how the AODA impacts Ontario's Building Code. <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page10160.aspx>

The consultation covered eight key accessibility areas:

1. Renovation

Accessibility and the Building Code Public Consultation

2. Barrier-Free Path of Travel
3. Vertical Access
4. Visitable Suites in Multi-unit Residential Buildings
5. Adaptable Design and Construction
6. Visual Fire Alarms
7. Washrooms
8. Use of Educational and Resource Materials

March of Dimes' formal submission to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing recommended the following:



The proposed “General Approach” focusing on accommodating manual wheelchairs, is not equitable. For example, expecting people with powered wheelchairs and scooters to perform T-Turns instead of including Ontario Building Code provisions for adequate turning radius will disadvantage many people.

Historical, aggregated statistics indicating higher use of manual wheelchairs may not be the appropriate foundation for preparing for the future of an aging society. The reality for many people with disabilities is that powered-mobility devices are a lifelong source of independence.

GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MANITOBA ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Province to Introduce Accessibility Legislation in 2013

To ensure Manitobans continue to benefit from the removal of accessibility barriers and to prevent new barriers from being introduced, Family Services and Labour Minister Jennifer Howard, minister responsible for persons with disabilities, accepted the recommendations of the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Council on enacting new accessibility legislation. Much of this was also discussed during the cabinet briefing at the Manitoba legislature last November with Minister Howard and March of Dimes’ representatives Jerry Lucas and Steven Christianson.

“More than 180,000 Manitobans face barriers that prevent their full participation in activities others take for granted and this is very detrimental to people with disabilities, their families and friends, and the community,” said Howard. “We accept the recommendations for new legislation and thank the council for its significant contribution.”

The minister noted the government is also examining broader questions surrounding compliance with the new legislation such as inspections and penalties for non-compliance.



Hon. Jennifer Howard, Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities

The recommendations of the council have defined critical elements essential to accessibility legislation including:

- the process should develop clear and achievable goals;
- accessibility standards should affect both public and private sectors;
- people with disabilities and other stakeholders, such as businesses and municipalities, should play a central role in the development of legislation standards;
- guarantees in human rights codes should not be affected; and
- a regular review of progress should take place.



"The main goal of the new accessibility legislation would be to prevent barriers by working with public and private sectors on long-range plans to ensure accessibility", Howard said, adding that "the introduction of the legislation would lay out a framework for the development and implementation of accessibility standards and serve as an important step in fulfilling the vision of a fully accessible society."

"Education will be key to introducing the new legislation, to boost public awareness of the benefits of full accessibility and to create a clear understanding of the obligations individuals and organizations will have under standards established by the act," Howard said.

The Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Council was created to make recommendations on enacting legislation for the prevention and removal of barriers and on other action the government can take to improve accessibility.

The council has 12 members with diverse backgrounds and experiences including representatives of organizations of people with disabilities, business and municipalities.

More information on the 43 recommendations of the Manitoba Accessibility Advisory Council and the Manitoba government's response is available at the Disabilities Issues Office website at www.gov.mb.ca/dio

Ontario Seniors Action Plan

Ontario's Minister of Health and Minister Responsible for Seniors jointly announced the overview of the Ontario Action Plan for Seniors.

The full report may be found at the following link: <http://www.ontario.ca/health-and-wellness/ontarios-action-plan-seniors>

The Action Plan will:

- Provide more home care services by expanding personal support worker services through community support agencies.
- Create a 'one-stop' information source for seniors' services online at ontario.ca/seniors and by phone at 1-888-910-1999.
- Enhance elder abuse prevention training for community agencies.
- Implement a wandering prevention



program to help families living with Alzheimer's and other dementias.

The Action Plan also focuses on "age-friendly communities", a concept already in practice in several jurisdictions (Manitoba, for example). This concept is guided by the definitions provided by the World Health Organization (WHO).

As defined by WHO, age-friendly communities adapt their "structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive



of, older people with varying needs and capacities."

Age-Friendly Communities

According to the World Health Organization, age-friendly cities and communities must address the needs of seniors across eight dimensions:

1. outdoor spaces and buildings (walkways, roads, parks, etc.)
2. transportation
3. housing
4. social participation
5. respect and social inclusion

6. civic participation and employment
7. communication
8. community support and health services.

A number of jurisdictions have begun investing in age-friendly communities

Details are yet to be announced. However, the implications of such a plan impact a range of programs and services (somewhat reminiscent of the action plan called for in the Toronto Declaration), everything ranging from attendant care and accessible housing to a more focused harmonization of the AODA's regulatory structure.

March of Dimes Speaks Out on Income and Employment Support Proposed Changes

March of Dimes has reviewed the Social Assistance Review in all its aspects. Income and employment support proposed changes are of particular interest to our organization. The following outlines March of Dimes' concerns and recommendations to the Ontario government regarding this key aspect for people with disabilities.

The March of Dimes believes that many of the recommendations of the Social Assistance



Munir A. Sheikh and Frances Lankin, Commissioners and authors of the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario.

Review will benefit people with disabilities on income and employment supports. However, any potential benefits resulting from implementing these recommendations will be lost if the implementation of the disability employment support component is downloaded to the municipalities. As outlined in the government's 2012 budget statement, March of Dimes agrees that



employment supports for persons with a disability should be managed under Employment Ontario within Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU).

Key points:

- Evidence from other provincial initiatives downloaded to municipalities has resulted in a wide variation of program offerings, delivery mechanisms and citizen eligibility criteria. An example of this is the Ontario Renovates program which has no consistency across Ontario and no rationale for the wide variation in program parameters across Ontario.
- Services provided by municipalities vary according to the needs of the local community. Due to the number of municipalities, there will be no consistency across the province in employment service practices for people with disabilities. This will result in an inability for clients to move to different communities without re-starting their employment supports.
- Where income and employment supports are combined, income maintenance is clearly the priority service. This puts employment programs, which could have a longer term positive impact both on the economy and the individual, on the “back-burner”. This is currently evident in the combined income and employment program housed in the Ontario Disability Support Program. March of Dimes supports income maintenance for all social assistance recipients being managed by one system (perhaps municipalities). Employment supports should be managed by another – Employment Ontario- thus enhancing focus on this key area.
- From an employer perspective, employment supports at the municipal level have a social service or charitable perspective. Employment agencies, such as the March of Dimes, work with employers establishing a business to business relationship. Clients associated with Employment Ontario /MTCU are supported by a segment of the government focused on vocational activities. It is this ministry's key competency. This is viewed as a more professional approach by employers.
- Focusing services within key ministries is not only more efficient but is cost-effective for both the government of Ontario and the Ontario taxpayer.



2013 Speech from the Throne



New Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne

**2nd Session, 40th Parliament
Delivered by Lt. Governor,
David Onley
Queen's Park - Toronto
Tuesday February 19, 2013**

The first Speech from the Throne under Premier Kathleen Wynne was delivered in the Legislative Assembly, re-starting the affairs of Queen's Park after a 127 day prorogation. The Liberals hold a minority government, with one Liberal seat up for by-election before the next general election.

Premier Wynne had stated during the Ontario leadership convention that she intends to move on implementing as many recommendations as possible from the Social Assistance Review. The Speech,

outlining the priorities of her government, reiterated that theme, as well as making it clear that program spending will continue to be restrained, with a commitment to continuing consideration of the Drummond Report recommendations.

Disability received an early spotlight in this speech. The ADO will be removed from Community and Social Services and will now be housed in the reformed Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment, now led by Minister Eric Hoskins, to help increase the participation of Ontarians with disabilities in the workforce. With Employment also rolled into this one Ministry, the message now emphasizes economics rather than social service. Given the transformative nature of the AODA, this is welcome news. However, rolling Employment into this Ministry bears the question of whether or not the Social Assistance Review's recommendation to download employment services to the municipalities is still on the government's radar. Meetings with Cabinet and ministerial staff over the next few weeks will be arranged to obtain further details.

The government will continue to expand home care throughout the province, acknowledging a substantial and growing demand for such services. The Seniors Strategy, outlined in January, will also continue to unfold. Details on both fronts are yet to be announced.

Toronto Declaration Reach



Living Longer Living Better
Get plugged into FICCDAT

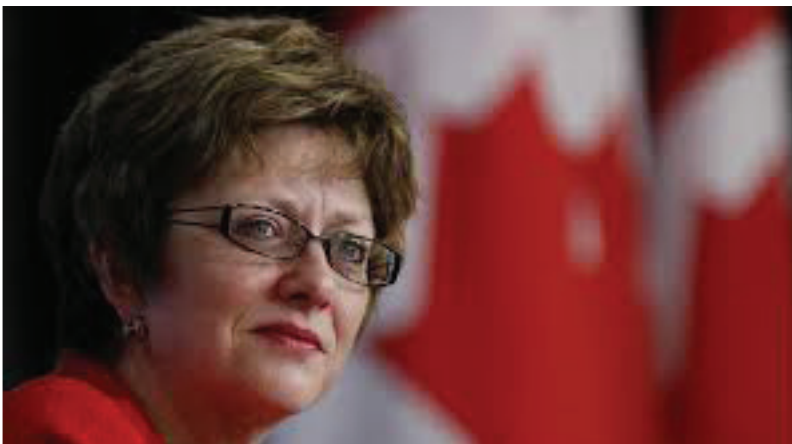
The essence of the Toronto Declaration, a call to action produced as a result of the 2011 Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging and Technology (FICCDAT), has now been formally submitted as pre-budget papers to each provincial finance minister in consideration of their 2013 provincial budgets.

The need to consider issues that bridge aging and disability is something confronting governments coast to coast, and a number of Cabinet ministers have expressed gratitude for the ideas (see "Ottawa's Diane Finley responds to Andria Spindel" below).

As Alberta Minister of Finance, Doug Horner, wrote in a recent letter, "in the next few months, my colleagues and I will be finalizing Budget 2013, and your ideas and suggestions will be considered during this time....I appreciate the time and effort spent on your submission....thank you again for sharing your ideas."

It may now be said that the Toronto Declaration is in the hands of the country's most influential policy- and decision-makers.

Ottawa's Diane Finley Responds to Andria Spindel's Letter Regarding the Toronto Declaration



Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources Skills and Development Canada

Dear Ms. Spindel:

Thank you for your correspondence concerning the Toronto Declaration. As stated in the Declaration the connection between aging and disability is important and will only grow in importance as Canada's population ages.

Through the programs and benefits it administers, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada



(HRSDC) plays a key role in the federal government in addressing issues related to seniors and people with disabilities. For example, in relation to income security, benefits such as the Old Age Security pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement help ensure that all seniors, including those with disabilities, have sufficient income. The Canada Pension Plan disability benefit also provides earnings replacement for eligible workers who can no longer work because of a severe and prolonged disability.

In relation to employment, in March 2012, the government, in support of its commitment to labour market participation of older workers, tasked the National Seniors Council with seeking the view of employers on how to retain and attract older workers, specifically those most at risk of withdrawing from the labour force or becoming unemployed, including those with a disability.

Beyond income security and employment, a key issue for both seniors and people with disabilities is ensuring that communities are accessible for persons who may have mobility limitations. The government demonstrated its commitment to helping all Canadians, regardless of physical ability, to participate fully in their communities through the creation, in 2007, of the Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF), a grant and contribution program designed to support community-based projects that improve access and remove barriers. In 2010, the government built on the success of EAF by providing an additional \$45 million over the next 3 years. Since its creation, EAF has supported over 800 community-based projects across Canada. Moreover, the New Horizons for Seniors Program helps to ensure that seniors are able to benefit from and contribute to the quality of life in their community through their social participation and active living.

... As you can tell from these examples, HRSDC understands how issues affecting seniors and people with disabilities must be bridged, and is committed to continuing to address these issues in its policies and programming. I also recognize and agree with your insight that while there are differences in the experiences of growing older with a disability and growing older into a disability, common challenges and opportunities exist. Focusing on the similarities between these two populations in our policies and programs will help ensure that we both maximize our impact and address the issue of Canada's changing demographics.

In closing, I would like to thank you again for your work in this area and for sharing the Toronto Declaration. As you continue to work through these important issues, I would be happy to hear back from you on your progress and success.

Yours sincerely,

The Hon. Diane Finley

Minister of Human Resources Skills and Development Canada



Alberta Budget Increases Supports for Vulnerable Albertans

March 7, 2013; Legislative Assembly – Edmonton



Premier Alison Redford

Alberta Premier, Alison Redford, describes the province's 2013 budget as "living within our means". Translation: a few cuts here and there; modest increases in spending here and there.

No new taxes were introduced in this year's budget, and neither were any major new program announcements in the human and social services fields.

However, the few increases in spending for 2013 are found in the Human Services portfolio, with disability programs as one of the main beneficiaries.

The province in February released its Social Policy Framework, the plan that considers Alberta's emerging challenges and priorities (including the province's population increase of roughly 100,000 people per year) and maps out a coherent approach to human, health and social service delivery.

The Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped program receives a 4.4% increase, while developmental disabilities receives a \$5.5 million increase. Family support for children with disabilities increases by \$6 million. Contracted agencies of the province get a \$67.7 million increase to support salary increases as well as for recruitment purposes.

Employment training, income supports and health benefits for unemployed Albertans drops from \$981 to \$883 million. This move helps cover the increases in human services spending, and reflects the job boom in the province.

Health spending increases by 3%. The Alberta Seniors Benefit program increases by \$358 million. And a new Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program will be implemented for seniors who own homes to defer taxes until they sell their homes. PharmaCare, a new program, will commence in 2014.

As with most provinces, Alberta is finding ways to spend smarter, and attracting and maintaining a robust non-for-profit sector is key to this rationale. Organizations like March of Dimes should see potential over the next several years.

For more information about Alberta's Social Policy Framework, please visit: www.socialpolicy.alberta.ca.

Note: March of Dimes' submission to this consultation in 2012 focused on the principles and recommendations of our Toronto Declaration.

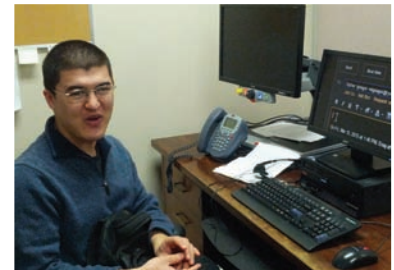
Official information about the 2013 Alberta budget may be found at www.budget2013.alberta.ca.

Government Relations and Advocacy Welcomes Ryerson Student

Please welcome the young man responsible for the March of Dimes' Inclusion Barometer, Enayat Amiri. He is a Ryerson University master's student in social work, and has joined the Government Relations and Advocacy department as part of his 2013 field placement.

Enayat will be developing a template that helps universities get a sense of how inclusive they are -- and not just by looking at legal compliance, but how students, staff and faculty with disabilities are included in the

total university experience. Enayat's Inclusion Barometer will be looking at everything from frosh week activities and other social events to accessible student housing, attendant care and, of course, physical access.



Ryerson student, Enayat Amiri

MP John Carmichael Visits March of Dimes



John Carmichael (left), MP for the federal riding of Don Valley West congratulates Andria Spindel (centre), MOD President and CEO and Judy Quillin (right), Director Employment Services on receiving funding from Human Resources Skills and Development Canada for the continuation of funding for the Community Coordinator Project across Ontario. This three-year, annually-renewed, funding provides support for persons with disabilities who require assistance entering the workforce.



Tax Incentives

In 2011, the federal Standing Committee on Finance commenced a study of the existing tax incentives for charitable giving in Canada. The objective was to develop recommendations that would facilitate and encourage giving to charitable organizations.

Chaired by Member of Parliament, James Rajotte, the Standing Committee on Finance recently completed its report and issued twelve recommendations to the Government of Canada to help improve the system that governs charities in Canada as well as to encourage a more robust individual and corporate donation culture across the country.

- eliminate or lower the capital gains tax on charitable donations of real or immovable property or the shares of private corporations to charities
- explore the feasibility of adopting a stretch tax credit
- extend the carry-forward period for claiming a charitable donation
- increase charitable giving in the corporate sector, including a review of the current donation contribution limit
- consider the promotion of bequests to charitable organizations and transfers of property to a charity as a result of a will
- ensure greater simplicity and reduced administrative compliance costs for charities
- monitor and make available the data on charitable giving trends and characteristics
- remind and educate Canadians of the



MP James Rajotte, Chair, Standing Committee on Finance

tax incentives available for giving

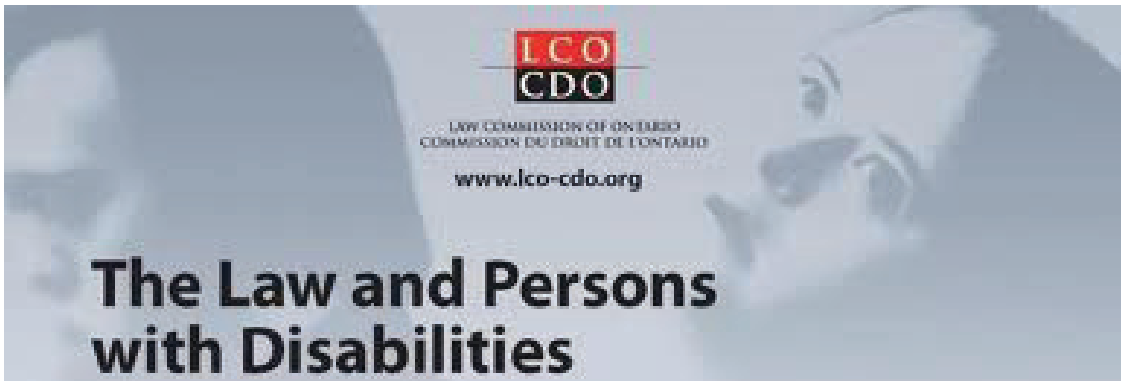
- promote the use of "mobile giving"
- explore the use of social finance instruments to encourage the development of government-community partnerships
- consider streamlining the excess of corporate holdings provisions for private foundations
- giving the CRA greater ability to disclose serious non-compliance by qualified donees, disclose their annual returns, and establish a requirement for charities to demonstrate annually their public benefit.

March of Dimes helped promote the idea of a stretch tax credit to the Finance Committee through the collective submission of Imagine Canada.

The next step is to await a formal response from the government after the report is tabled in Parliament.



Law Commission of Ontario Makes Public Its Report



A Framework for the Law as it Affects Persons with Disabilities

Over the past three years, March of Dimes, along with many other disability organizations and people with disabilities, have participated in, and made submissions to, the Law Commission of Ontario's (LCO) public consultations on how to make Ontario's legal system more equitable and more accessible to people with disabilities. The landmark "Framework" document is the result of their findings and deliberations. Following are excerpts from that Framework summary.

Using the Framework

This draft Framework is based on the legal foundations of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code and international documents which have been ratified by Canada, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It also draws on key policy documents such as the federal government's In Unison: Advancing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As such, it has its roots in the legal obligations and policy commitments

that bind government. It does not replace any of these documents, but is intended to build on these foundations and provide the basis for the further development of the law as it affects persons with disabilities. ...

The Framework is intended to guide the development and evaluation of laws, policies and practices to ensure that the realities of the circumstances and experiences of persons with disabilities are taken into account, and that laws, policies and practices promote positive outcomes for these members of society. It is composed of principles and factors to take into account in applying the principles, and uses a step-by-step approach. It has been developed for use by:

- Policy-makers and legislators;
- Advocacy organizations and community groups that work with persons with disabilities and/or deal with issues that affect them; and
- Public or private actors that develop or administer policies or practices that may affect persons with disabilities.



Principles for the Law as it Affects Persons with Disabilities

In order to counteract negative stereotypes and assumptions about persons with disabilities, reaffirm the status of persons with disabilities as equal members of society and bearers of both rights and responsibilities, and encourage government to take positive steps to secure the well-being of persons with disabilities, this Framework centres on a set of principles for the law as it affects persons with disabilities.

1. **Respecting the Dignity and Worth of Persons with Disabilities:**

This principle recognizes the inherent, equal and inalienable worth of every individual, including every person with a disability. All members of the human family are full persons, with the right to be valued, respected and considered and to have both one's contributions and needs recognized.

2. **Responding to Diversity in Human Abilities and Other Characteristics:**

This principle requires recognition of and responsiveness to the reality that all people exist along a continuum of abilities in many areas, that abilities will vary along the life-course, and that each person with a disability is unique in needs, circumstances and identities, as well as to the multiple and intersecting identities of persons with disabilities that may act to increase or diminish discrimination and disadvantage.

3. **Fostering Autonomy and Independence:**

This principle requires the creation of conditions to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to make choices that affect their lives and to do as much for

themselves as possible or as they desire, with appropriate and adequate supports as required.

4. **Promoting Social Inclusion and Participation:**

This principle refers to designing society in a way that promotes the ability of all persons with disabilities to be actively involved with their community by removing physical, social, attitudinal and systemic barriers to exercising the incidents of such citizenship and by facilitating their involvement.

5. **Facilitating the Right to Live in Safety:**

This principle refers to the right of persons with disabilities to live without fear of abuse or exploitation and where appropriate to receive support in making decisions that could have an impact on safety.

6. **Recognizing That We All Live in Society:**

This principle acknowledges that persons with disabilities are members of society, with entitlements and responsibilities, and that other members of society also have entitlements and responsibilities.

Both the Framework document and the final report are available on-line at www.lco-cdo.org

FORMER ONTARIO FINANCE MINISTER DWIGHT DUNCAN MAKES LANDMARK PUBLIC DECLARATION

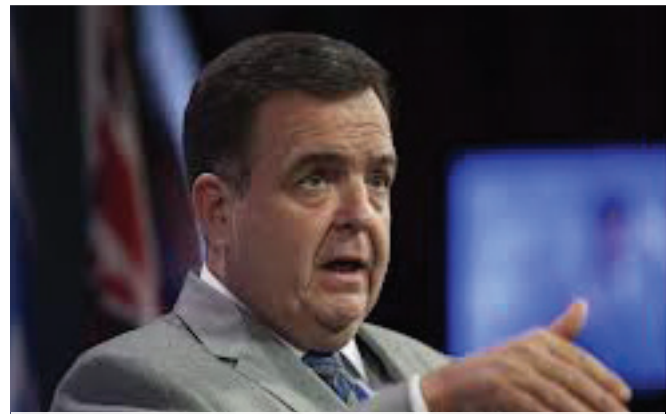
Our friends at the AODA Alliance published the following News Release of interest to people with disabilities and disability organizations.

On January 22, 2013, former Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan gave an important speech at the prestigious Canadian Club. In his update on Ontario's economy and provincial budget, he made a landmark declaration, which all governments across Canada should follow. He declared: "Public money used for capital infrastructure or procurement of goods and services should never be used to create or perpetuate barriers against persons with disabilities."

We congratulate and commend Mr. Duncan for this important declaration. We thank him for including such an important public statement about the Ontario economy. We shall build on Mr. Duncan's declaration.

For a podcast or webcast of Dwight Duncan's entire January 22, 2013 speech at the Canadian Club, visit <http://is.gd/EyQqw7>

Mr. Duncan has been a major supporter of our cause throughout his years in public life. Almost fifteen years ago, on October 29, 1998, during the Mike Harris Conservative Government, Dwight Duncan, then an opposition Liberal MPP, brought forward



Former Finance Minister Dwight Duncan

a resolution in the Ontario Legislature. His resolution called on the Government to pass a Disabilities Act that would honour the 11 principles that our predecessor coalition, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, had created. Those 11 principles aimed to ensure that the promised Disabilities Act would be strong and effective.

As one of the most important events along the decade-long campaign to win the enactment of the AODA, on that day in October 1998, the Ontario Legislature unanimously passed Dwight Duncan's resolution. In the 1999 and 2003 Ontario elections, Dalton McGuinty promised a Disabilities Act that would fulfill the Duncan resolution. To this day, the 1998 resolution that Dwight Duncan championed on our behalf remains the eternal yardstick by which we measure actions taken under the AODA.



BC's Lean Budget, Clark's Final Before May Election

February 19, 2013

Legislative Assembly – Victoria

The BC Liberals, elected in 2001, will ask voters on May 14 of this year to keep them and Premier Clark in the government seat.

With today's budget representing the final annual fiscal plan before heading to the polls, one wonders how much of a pre-election budget this actually is. Alternatively, are BC's Liberals confident heading to the polls with their decade-plus track record in government. "More than a decade of prudent fiscal management has paid off for BC....We are in the enviable position of having a balanced budget," explained Minister of Finance Michael de Jong in a news release.

The 2013 Budget contains a few targeted tax increases (eg. a temporary hike to the personal tax rate for those earning more than \$150,000 per year; a \$2 increase to the price of a carton of cigarettes) and a few targeted areas for increased spending, mainly in the health and social services for children and families.

BC's relatively high population of seniors should welcome the measure that will see generic drug prices drop to 25% of that for brand name drugs by April of this year, with another 20% reduction in April of 2014.

On the flipside, Medical Services Plan premiums (MSPs), similar to OHIP in Ontario, will increase by 4% January 2014 for two years, with the increase set to expire January 1, 2016.

By far, spending on the healthcare system



BC Premier, Christy Clark

and for programs and services for children received the lion's share of spending increases.

Health expenditures see an additional \$2.4 billion in this fiscal plan to support and protect programs. New measures for children focus on a one-time \$1,200 grant for children born January 1, 2007 and later that will be deposited into an approved RESP. Finance Minister de Jong introduced an early childhood tax credit worth up to \$660 per family per year. Additional monies are allocated for childcare spaces, childcare services and arts programs for kids.

Existing initiatives, such as the recently announced "Improving Care for BC Seniors: An Action Plan" and the Social Development Minister's Council on Employment and Accessibility, receive continued support.

Official government information about the 2013 BC budget may be found at www.bcbudget.ca.

Motion from Toronto's Disability Issues Committee

We mentioned in a previous issue of The Advocate that the City of Toronto's Disability Issues Committee, at the request of Government Relations representative Janet Macmaster, consider the implementation of a reduced TTC fare for riders with disabilities living on a low income. That motion has been forwarded by the Chair, Councillor Adam Vaughan, to City Hall's committees that deliberate on transportation, executive matters and finance, as well as other relevant transportation partners outside of City Hall. What started as a social cause and a common-sense idea is slowly making its way toward the destination of public policy.

Keep up the cause, Janet!



A glimpse of the new Toronto streetcar

Independent Broadcast Executive Honoured for Contribution Work in Accessibility



Beverley Milligan, CEO of Media Access Canada, has been awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of her many years of work on behalf of Canadians with disabilities in the area of accessible media. "Not only am I so very honoured by this recognition, but also my mother, who is deaf and needs

closed-captioning to understand audio in media, was born the same year as Queen Elizabeth - a parallel that makes the award very special to me", noted Ms. Milligan.

This award recognizes Milligan's ongoing contributions to Canadian society through her work developing the corporate sponsorship model that led to widespread closed-captioning of television programs



for the deaf and hard of hearing. She has also worked tirelessly to push for increased attention to and funding for accessibility in broadcasting, telecommunications and on the world wide web. "It is a well-known fact that what is good for Canadians with disabilities is good for all Canadians, so it has always been a honour to volunteer in this area", said Ms. Milligan.

In celebration of Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee, 60,000 Canadians who have made

exceptional contributions to their country are being honoured with the medals. The Lieutenant Governor and a group of distinguished Ontarians presented the medals at a special Diamond Jubilee Gala at Roy Thompson Hall, in Toronto, on February 6, 2013.

Beverly Milligan is a March of Dimes' Access 2020 Coalition partner/founder. For more information, please visit www.mediac.ca/proj-Access2020.asp

In The Next Issue

Provincial Budgets

Nova Scotia Disability/Consultation

Employment Caregiver

Ottawa Budget Lock-up

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