

The Advocate

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Always Advocating FOR YOU



Moore on the Issues
with Bobbi Moore

Join us at “Moore on the Issues”, featuring March of Dimes’ Bobbi Moore, to read more about these and dozens of other issues that we’ve been working on. As Bobbi likes to say, “it’s all about achieving social justice”.

http://www.marchofdimes.ca/dimes/people_with_disabilities_caregivers/advocacy/

Photo Card Act – Assented November 27

Drivers will now have the option of adding Canadian citizenship information to their driver's licence to create an "enhanced" driver's licence that can be used as a passport alternative at Canada-U.S. land and sea border crossings. The Lieutenant Governor gave his Royal Assent to the bill on November 27.

Most important for us, the legislation also allows non-drivers (ie. Many people with disabilities) to obtain an optional photo identification card—providing these individuals with a convenient, government-issued photo card for use when completing everyday transactions, like opening a bank account. Like driver's licence holders, Canadian citizens who are non-drivers would also have the option of adding citizenship information to create an "enhanced" photo card.

Prior to the Photo Card Act, nearly four million people in Ontario do not have a driver's licence – and, therefore, do not have the most commonly accepted piece of government-issued identification.

Latest word from the Ministry is that the new cards will be available through Service Ontario locations in the spring of 2010. Ontario March of Dimes was among the supporting advocates for such a measure during the initial Ministerial consultations nearly two

years ago. As reported in the July 2008 edition of the Advocate, from our long-time advocate colleague, Warren Rupnarain, "being able to this type of card creates greater access and opportunity. I am thrilled to see many of our recommendations written into the development of this."

Private Member's Bill 109 – Hat's Off, Mr. Murdoch.

On November 6, 2008, Independent Member Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound) presented his Private Member's Bill, 109, the Taxation Amendment Act (equipment purchased for persons with disabilities).

The purpose of the Bill is to amend the provincial tax act to increase an individual's access to assistive devices needed to carry out the usual activities of daily living, and have such expenses recognized against one's income.

Is there anyone who would think that it's not a good idea to give people with disabilities a financial break on such expenses?

Government MPP Bob Delaney certainly thought Bill 109 was worthy. "I do have to say from the very outset that I support the bill. The member is on to a good idea here," Mr. Delaney stated in the Legislative Assembly.

MPP Kevin Flynn, also of the Government Caucus, expressed his support: “If you see a bill like this that comes forward, a private member's bill that has the support of such organizations as the March of Dimes and the Canadian Paraplegic Association, regardless of the party membership of the member who has brought it forward...this is one that is worthy of support.”

Bill 109 has been referred to the Committee on Social Policy. While we will make sure we keep you up to date on its progress, we offer our congratulations to Mr. Murdoch and his staff for their dedication to advancing the issues critical to people with disabilities in Ontario. We also acknowledge the interventions of support by MPPs Peter Kormos, Rosario Marchese, Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott and Sylvia Jones.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On November 27, 2008, March of Dimes’ representatives on Toronto’s Disability Issues Committee participated in the Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards at Toronto City Hall – on the Mayor’s occasion of recognizing the 60th anniversary of the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In observance of this landmark event, we re-print the Preamble of the Declaration, and hope you find it as inspiring as we always do.



Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore,

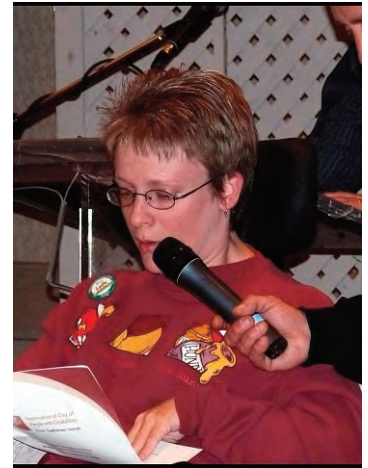
The General Assembly,

Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

“Moore on the Issues” International Day

On December 3, 2008, the City of Toronto, March of Dimes and many other community partners celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Bobbi Moore,

from “Moore on the Issues”, was asked by City officials to read her award-winning poem, *That Special Hand that Reaches for Me*. Be inspired as we were when we



first heard the poem – click here to read: http://www.marchofdimes.ca/dimes/people_with_disabilities_caregivers/advocacy/current_issues/Moore+On+The+Issues.htm

Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Review Issues Recommendations

October 31, 2008 – Queen’s Park
The **Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review**, in which Ontario March of Dimes participated during the stakeholder consultations in the summer of 2007, completed its mandate. More than two years of consultation, stakeholder meetings, and recommendations culminated in an announcement of long-range provincial-municipal program financing and service delivery.

The announcement at Queen’s Park commenced with a background briefing, followed by a press conference (attended by Finance Minister Duncan, Municipal Affairs & Housing Minister

Watson, AMO President Peter Hume, Toronto Mayor Miller, and Mississauga Mayor, to name a few) and a stakeholder/press Q&A.

Overall, by 2018, municipalities will see a \$1.5 billion per year net benefit from this agreement.

In 2007, during the early stages of the Review, the government announced the upload of the Ontario Disability Support Payments program and the Ontario Drug Benefits program, to be completed by 2011.

The municipal costs for Ontario Drug Benefits were uploaded effective January 1, 2008, as was further outlined in the 2008 Ontario Budget.

Starting in 2009, the Province will begin the upload of municipal costs for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). The ODSP portion of the upload will be completed by 2011. The announcement provides the further upload of Ontario Works benefits and court security costs. Starting in 2010, the Province will upload the municipal costs of Ontario Works benefits (income and employment assistance) over 9 years. Starting in 2012, the Province will upload the costs of court security (including offender transportation) over seven years, by providing funding to municipalities to a maximum of \$125 million annually. Other notable features of the agreement...

- The Province and municipalities will work towards consolidating the many existing housing and homelessness programs into an Outcome-focused housing service managed at the municipal level:
- Provincial pressure on the federal government will accelerate on the topic of existing federal commitments for affordable housing, poverty reduction and adequate Employment Insurance for vulnerable people:
- The Province will immediately begin developing an accountability framework for social services that focuses on results: and
- Work will begin to simplify and modernize the delivery of income assistance and employment-related supports.

A particularly noteworthy component found in today's briefing looks to the notion of accountability and program effectiveness, a topic Ontario March of Dimes' representatives having been urging Ontario government representatives to more carefully consider. As the release states, "several accountability mechanisms are used for cost-share programs. These are linked mainly to "units of service" rather than outcomes for the people being served. The municipal and provincial governments will jointly develop an accountability framework for social services that focuses strongly on the results that programs achieve."

In other words, today's announcement recognizes the need that we require new paradigms in service delivery and new measures of effectiveness similar

to what Ontario March of Dimes has been recommending, and not just changes to levels of funding.

RDSP Now Harmonized in Ontario

Dear Minister Meilleur:
On behalf of the Board of Directors of March of Dimes, I am delighted to learn of your announcement regarding the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP).

March of Dimes was involved in the original federal consultations on the development of an RDSP, and advocated for its implementation in the Income Tax Act through our Warren's World initiative.

Today, we warmly applaud you and your colleagues for implementing the measures necessary for Ontarians with disabilities to fully participate in this savings program that helps bolster the financial security of family members with a disability.



Andria Spindel
President and CEO

Community Care Access Centres

December 15, 2008

A new public reporting system and expanded role for CCACs in Ontario was announced by Health and Long-Term Care Minister, David Caplan. The thrust of the announcement focuses on unfolding a strategy that will “strengthen the way CCACs make arrangements for home care services, provide information and referrals to community-related services,” explained Minister Caplan.

A public reporting system, making fully transparent how winning bidders received contracts from CCACs, will be instituted immediately. CCACs will now be required to utilize the services of “fairness advisors” for all RFPs.

Public reporting which will disclose selection rationale for choosing contractors, new performance measures and the requirement that CCACs and service providers develop annual continuous quality improvement plans, were also included in today's announcement, measures advocated by Ontario March of Dimes in a 2004 submission to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (Procurement Review Project).

The Minister also moved on the function of CCACs in the healthcare system. Among the changes are the following:

- Enabling CCACs to provide clients

with care teams;

- Allowing CCACs to manage the placement of persons into programs, facilities and residential settings (example: supportive housing);
- Allowing CCACs to contract with service providers to provide occupational therapy in a group setting (in addition to a client's home);
- Enabling greater flexibility in how therapy services are provided; and
- Returning CCACs to community boards.

Details of the announcement will be available in the coming weeks.

The announcement reflects many recommendations that have been advocated in our sector. A November 2004 OMOD submission to the Health Minister proposed several of the changes -- notably major reforms to the competitive bidding process for RFPs, enhanced public accountability in the bidding, delivery and renewal process, and an emphasis on quality of service. That submission may be found at our website at

http://www.marchofdimes.ca/NR/rdonlyres/E5F457F5-5206-4D27-9B19-E98AECC4D317/0/CCAC_review_OMOD.pdf

Minister Caplan recognizes Jonas Salk Award Winner



Minister of Health and Long Term Care David Caplan, Jonas Salk award winner Dr. Andres M. Lozano, March of Dimes Canada Board Chair David A. Boyle and V.P. of sanofi pasteur Dr. Luis Barreto.

Ontario Pre-Budget Submission

On Friday November 21, 2008, March of Dimes delivered recommendations to Finance Minister Dwight Duncan on the 2009 Ontario Budget. Our focus in this submission was Home and Vehicle Modifications.

March of Dimes President and CEO, Andria Spindel, explains that, “by extending eligibility for certain programs (Aging at Home Strategy) and with inter-ministerial cooperation, to tap into existing dollars to broaden the reach of the program, we help people to remain in their communities, and reduce the current financial pressures on chronic care and hospital facilities.”

With an aging society and a significant population of Ontarians with disabilities,

demand for the home modification service far exceeds the existing funds. As the administrator of the modification program since its establishment in 1999 by the Government of Ontario, March of Dimes has the expertise on how to save money and to improve service to Ontario's most vulnerable. As Vice-President of Programs, Jerry Lucas, explains, "There is a way to meet the need, improve health and welfare, and ultimately save the government money – a measure that is particularly required during such uncertain economic times."

We invite you to read our Pre-Budget Submission, "Achieving the DoAble in Uncertain Economic Times", at the following link:
http://www.marchofdimes.ca/dimes/people_with_disabilities_caregivers/advocacy/advocacy_policy_submissions/

Charities & Nonprofits Propose Measures to Prime Minister to help Canadians and Communities during Economic Downturn

The following Open Letter was sent to Prime Minister Harper through Imagine Canada, the national "umbrella" that works on behalf of Canada's charities and non-profits, on behalf of more than 1,000 charitable and non-profit organizations. The letter is posted at

our national website, http://www.marchofdimes.ca/dimes/national_programs/.

Dear Prime Minister:

We urge you to consider the important role of our federal government in supporting Canadians through the work of Canada's charities and nonprofits in our communities and around the world, particularly during periods of economic hardship. Over the past days and weeks, Canadians have heard and read in the media that demands on charitable organizations have begun to rise while donations may be increasingly at risk in light of the diminished capacity of individual and corporate donors to give.

The Government of Canada ensures that important programs and services are delivered to Canadians through direct grants and contributions, and through tax measures that have an important stimulative effect on giving. Both are critical forms of financial support, especially during difficult economic times.

We urge the Government of Canada to maintain existing levels of funding to Canada's charities and nonprofits through its grants and contributions programs. The many Canadians who serve their communities in these organizations in every reach of the country, a number of whom have joined us in signing this letter to you below, strongly believe that now is not the time to reduce support to communities through federal funding cuts. We are not asking for new support but a commitment to hold the line.

We also urge the Government of Canada to consider special short-term measures that will have an important stimulative effect on individual and corporate giving. In the past two years, your Government has introduced tax measures that have, in those economic circumstances, proven very effective in stimulating new charitable gifts. The adoption of short-term stimulative tax measures to leverage more private support, could assist in preserving critical donor revenues at a time when these funds will be needed most.



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**Have a Safe
and
Happy
Holiday
Season**

**See you in
2009**