

The Advocate

A GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS ADVISORY

A Publication of March of Dimes Canada



SUMMER GREETINGS

2008 Summer Series: Issue No.1

SUMMER GREETINGS



Summer Recreation and Integration Program at Lake Couchiching

Summer is a special time.

If you recognize this photograph it may be that our Government Relations Team dropped by your constituency office in the GTA, or even further afield, to deliver our Summer Greeting card personally to you. What a fun project! The card was also mailed to federal and provincial field offices throughout Ontario.

Our purpose is to strengthen connections with our elected officials and their constituents by outlining the vital services the March of Dimes has to offer. As the card says, "It's likely that 18% of your constituents have a disability. If you have questions about disability issues, we have solutions." Many people know our name, but not everyone knows the scope of our assistance to people with disabilities. Give us a call. March of Dimes, working to create a society inclusive of people with disabilities since 1951.

We hope you enjoy all that summer has to offer.

A Message from the Government Relations Team

Summer is a great time to reflect – on what we've done and what we hope to do.

As we reflect on our work in advocacy and with various governments over the past several months, we see movement and signs of change. And as positive as this is, it encourages us to do much more.

We recently had the privilege of meeting the very distinguished Anne McGuire, the UK's Minister for Disabled People and Member of Parliament for the riding of Stirling (Scotland).



Learning and exchanging from international experiences. Anne McGuire, MP and UK Minister of Disabled People, with participants from Literacy Options, on official visit to Canada to share knowledge and learn about our systems of governance and public policy as regards disability.

As fascinated as we were learning about the experiences, differences and similarities, between our two systems of governance, Minister McGuire seemed equally fascinated by the work we do. During our exchange, she posed a highly prescient question: March of Dimes seems to do everything... How do you do it?

From housing and health, to transportation, municipal affairs, human rights, seniors, children and youth services, recreation, community and social services, emergency management and taxation. Indeed. How do we do it? That question served as more than sufficient food for thought.

But perhaps, upon reflection, the question should be, "How can we do more?"

A former Prime Minister of ours was a passionate believer in everyone's ability to do more – even when things seem stretched to the limit. He would often tell staff, and sometimes foreign dignitaries, "when you've done all you can do, do just a little bit more."

We can all do that.

New Photo ID in Ontario

What is the most commonly used piece of photo identification in Ontario? Most people would probably cite the driver's licence.

Many people with disabilities do not have adequate photo identification for many purposes and transactions in life – primarily as a result of not having a driver's licence.

In fact, according to the Ministry of Transportation, nearly four million people in Ontario do not have a driver's licence and therefore do not have access to a basic identification document.

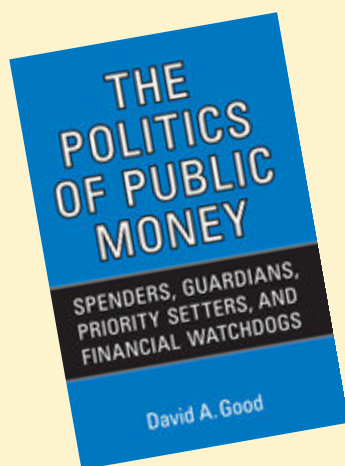
Most other provinces and territories have non-driver's licence IDs as an alternative and universally recognized form of identification.

During August 2007, Ontario March of Dimes sat at the stakeholder table with the Minister of Transportation to help develop a solution.

In June of this year, that solution was presented in the Legislative Assembly by the Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Transportation. Anyone who does not drive could obtain a newly proposed photo ID card, which has long been advocated by youth, people with disabilities and many seniors communities.

“This is great news,” explains Warren Rupnarain. “I have never had a driver’s licence, and many places require that type of photo ID – border crossings, financial institutions, gaming establishments, even video stores. The health card is strictly for medical purposes, and the Age of Majority Card is very limited in its applicability, so being able to have this type of card creates greater access and opportunity. As well, I am thrilled to see many of our recommendations written into the development of this bill.”

According to the Ministry, if the proposed legislation is passed once Queen’s Park resumes, the new card will also serve Ontarians as an alternative to a passport when crossing Canada-US borders by land and sea.



Recommended Reading

The Politics of Public Money

Author: David A. Good
By Steven Christianson

We are in an Age of Audit, where the emphasis is on “following the money” and not on “following the results”, says author David Good.

If that’s what’s happening in Ottawa, that’s a rather scary scenario.

According to Good, who is also an academic and former senior public servant, this pretty much represents where we are today in terms of the politics of public money.

In his 2008 reprint of *The Politics of Public Money: Spenders, Guardians, Priority Setters and Financial Watchdogs in the Canadian Government*, Good examines budgeting systems and structures in the Government of Canada, as well as some of the personalities that sometimes define the process, since the 1960s. He illuminates the relationships necessary to implementing political trajectories and emphases, and the behind-the-scenes influence found, for example, in senior Finance, PCO and PMO officials.

But this is far more valuable a book than merely for what one learns about the W-5s behind spending and budgets in Ottawa.

With a matrix of 400 departments, agencies, commissions and alternative delivery mechanisms, budgeting in Ottawa is, as Good asserts, “incremental and fragmented”. And part of this is attributed to the age-old interplay of administration and politics, or, as the title indicates, “*The Politics of Public Money*”.

More specifically, perception of spending is often an equal factor in the actual decisions of spending – a recipe that does not necessarily yield the most effective or sustainable results.

How is the federal budget in Canada put together? Where does new money for new ideas come from? How does one influence what is spent, what makes it onto the “frontburner”? These are valid questions in the fiscal context of growing federal surpluses.

Many MPs will tell you that most of Parliament’s work happens in committee, and they say so with a notable degree of pride. In this regard Good offers readers a fascinating and balanced exploration of the degree to which such work (in the Finance committee, at least) influences the spending and prioritization of public money.

According to Good: “Insiders and most others understand...that the committee (Finance) has little or no impact on what the Minister of Finance eventually decides to include in or leave

out of his/her budget. But yet the committee provides the appearance for its members that they are, in fact, influencing the shape and the contents of the budget.” (p. 231)

A lesson here suggests to those wishing to interact with or influence the federal budget that appearances and optics should never be confused with content and substance of outcome.

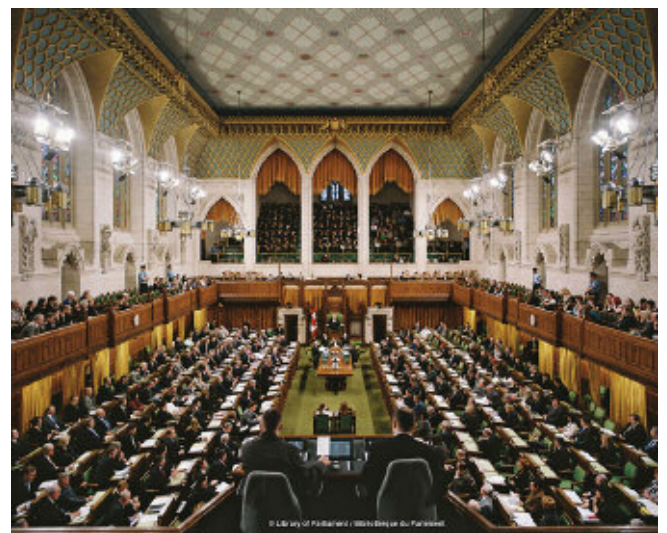
On a practical level, this is considerably useful when one determines the precise reasons to appear before the Finance Committee during budget consultations. It bears the question: Are organizations having representatives delivering presentations to Committee in an attempt to influence what is already a “baked cake”? Here again, the optics of an organization appearing before a high-level parliamentary committee may be more important than the substance of the outcome (which, might in itself, serve as the basis for a more detailed and fascinating subject of examination of whether or not the process is part of that outcome).

The Politics of Public Money has practical implications for the reader or student of government affairs: to anyone working in the field, it comes as no surprise that new ideas and new money most certainly require PMO and PCO priority list approval (a tightening of the centre). But in this Age of Audit, heralded in most notably by the Martin and Harper administrations, the other lesson offered by Good suggests that the “lobbyist” or “politico” in today’s Ottawa might want to be interacting more directly more with the “newer” watchdogs of the process, namely the Parliamentary Budget Office or the PMO.

The Politics of Public Money, \$32.95, (2008, 370 pages) is published by University of Toronto Press, and is part of the Institute of Public Administration Series in Public Management and Governance.

National Accessibility: It’s Everyone’s Business The Time to Act is Now Editorial

A wise Canadian MP once said, “the role of Parliamentarians is to govern for those without a voice.” With Parliament in summer recess, and as Members and Senators reflect on the plethora of pressing national and international issues, we are reminded of this basic tenet.



House of Commons - the law-making body of Canada. Will we see national caregiving or disability legislation introduced?

One of the fastest growing public policy opportunities today concerns Canadians with disabilities. The Government of Canada, and many provincial and territorial governments, have implemented a variety of policies and laws to work for Canadians with disabilities, to break down barriers, and to achieve accessibility and inclusion. Yet, even with such positive strides, national policy makers still have not embraced an urgent reality.

In December of last year, Canadians learned that 4.4 million of us—one out of every seven in the population—have a disability. This is according to the 2006 Census data compiled

from the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey.

That figure represents a 21.2% increase in just five years!

Ironic, isn't it? Numerically growing in leaps and bounds, but virtually non-existent on the policy radar.

Why such a marked increase? It is true that reporting or disclosing one's disability has become a more socially common practice in recent years. But look closer and you'll see that what lies beneath the statistics shows a more revealing trend and reality in Canadian society.

People are both aging into disability as well as aging with a disability. Aging and disability are inextricably linked.

So what should this suggest to government decision makers? Disability is everyone's business. Let's consider some of the pieces.

There are millions of people around the world providing care, support and assistance to family members, friends and neighbours whose everyday activities are limited by physical, cognitive or mental health conditions. This support can and ultimately does save significant government dollars.

Yet, there needs to be greater awareness and recognition of the diversity of the supportive care-giving experience. This means understanding and acknowledging the challenges associated with family/friend care-giving; as well as identifying strategies to bring about change.

Make no mistake: while supportive care-giving may appear to financially relieve the health and social services system, it also takes a toll on the actual caregivers who often experience stress, chronic pain, fatigue, burn-out, etc. This actually adds to the number of disabilities in Canada.

Canadians with disabilities and their care-givers require comprehensive support from the publicly funded system in the form of a national strategy.

Positive strides have been made, for example, in areas of tax credits, savings and investment vehicles, and expanded tax recognition of deductible expenses. However the fact remains that Canada has fallen behind. The United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and the United States have implemented caregiver recognition policies and laws that far surpass what Canada has.

Look even further and see that many other countries have national disability legislation. Canada is among the few countries without such legislation.

Quite simply, it costs more to do nothing. What numbers like those released by Statistics Canada suggest is that we need new standards to recognize society's changing reality.

Let's consider another piece of this reality. Care-giving in the home can often require costly modifications to allow the individual to live in their community, with dignity and independence. In Ontario for example, this is partly achieved through a program called 'Home and Vehicle Modification' which delivers funding assistance to individuals, in order to achieve greater and easier access to and within their home and vehicle.

This might mean the installation of a ramp, a wheelchair lift or grab bars in a washroom.

Modifying one's home or vehicle allows them to stay in their home and community—which greatly contributes to improving one's quality of life and overall well-being.

Home and vehicle modifications also help give back some independence to someone with a disability. Quite often the alternative would see people going into more costly long-term care facilities.

Nevertheless the funding at the national level needs to be there. The recognition of the reality underpinning the statistics needs to be there. A national strategy needs to be there.

A 21.2 % increase among those reporting a disability to Statistics Canada in a mere five years suggests that we as a country may already be behind the mark.

To the credit of the Harper administration, Canadians have been told that national disability legislation is on the horizon. However, in reality—as statistics suggest—that horizon needs to be more immediate. Yesterday would have been good.

Accessibility is a right, not a privilege. For roughly 20 years, March of Dimes has been pressing for national disability legislation to see the implementation of national standards, and even budgetary measures for home modifications nationally.

These issues will only become more pressing over the next few years. Parliament resumes in about a month. And, with heightened rumours of a federal election, let's encourage our federal decision makers to introduce the national disability legislation that was promised during the 2006 federal election (and recommended by Parliamentary committee after committee for more than the last 25 years). The time is now for the process to start, because, as Statistics Canada reminds us, accessibility really is becoming everyone's business.

Read more on upcoming national advocacy initiatives in the next issue of *The Advocate*. And remember, you can always register your support for national disability legislation at: www.marchofdimes.ca.

People on the Move

Congratulations Warren!

We are proud to announce the appointment of Warren Rupnarain as the Accessibility Coordinator for the Town of Markham.

Warren joined March of Dimes in the fall of 2005, originally as a student intern from Ryerson University. That one-term internship evolved into the national movement now known as Warren's World. Most recently, in the capacity of overnment Relations Advocate, Warren represented March of Dimes at meetings, in workshops, on committees, and as a member of various task forces and consultations.

While we look forward to our ongoing collaboration through Warren's World, we are confident that, with Warren at helm, the Town of Markham will soon be Canada's shining example of accessibility.

Welcome Janet

Our newest addition to the Government Relations family is Janet Macmaster, Government Relations Assistant.

Janet brings more than 20 years of volunteer experience and professional employment in the non-profit sector, including political campaigns, media, publishing and related professional associations, and, most recently, outreach charities to at-risk youth and vulnerable seniors.

Some of you may already know Janet's warm and friendly nature through her previous assignments and volunteer work here at March of Dimes over the past several years. Janet was instrumental in coordinating upwards of 135 volunteers over 24 hours in our Accessibility Section at the Rolling Stones event at Downsview Park in 2003, and previously assisted at Paul Martin Sr. Society events. Most recently, Janet helped execute our advocacy campaign during the provincial election last fall.

Janet can be reached at Extension 7388 and jmacmaster@marchofdimes.ca.

The Advocate... Now on Facebook

Want to discuss one of the articles you've read here? Want to join a conversation about these or other topics on government affairs and disability? Want to share your experiences from your Province or Territory?

Join us at our Facebook page



Further doors opening

In May an article ran in the Toronto Star entitled, "Attendants for disabled to fly free, court rules." Basically what it was saying was that the Federal Court of Appeal turned down an appeal by Air Canada and WestJet against a ruling made by the Canadian Transportation Agency in January 2008. The ruling is that the airlines offer a free seat to an attendant accompanying a passenger with a disability, and also to obese passengers who need an extra seat.

The ruling leaves the airlines 12 months to draft regulations on accommodating qualified passengers with disabilities. The policy is already in force for train, bus and marine travel in Canada. This opens doors for many people with disabilities who may not have been able to fly before without an attendant.

"This has been long advocated for by Canadians with disabilities and their families, as well as organizations like March of Dimes," said Andria Spindel, President and CEO of March of Dimes Canada. "This is an important step in removing barriers to the participation of people with disabilities, and we look forward to working with the federal government in developing a comprehensive framework for national disability legislation that applies to all sectors."

Sources: CP article/Toronto Star/May 13/08

Corporations Act Reform

Over the past 12 months, the Ministry of Government Services has issued three technical papers on the topic of modernizing the legal framework within which a non-profit entity exists and operates.

In each of the three consultations Ontario March of Dimes recommends strengthened and practical measures to enhance the public trust in, and maximize the efficiency of, Ontario's not-for-profits. Our three papers embrace a view that the governance for not-for-profit organizations – especially the charitable entity – must consider the public trust upon which much of the operation of a non-profit rests.



Our recommendations in total reflect the importance of preserving and enhancing public trust while creating a more efficient and effective operational environment for non-profits in Ontario.

The third paper discusses issues related to membership and corporate finance, including derivative action.

Derivative action refers to the right of a non-profit corporation's members to apply to a court to seek permission to bring an action for breach of the directors' fiduciary duty or any other obligation where the corporation is not taking action to pursue its own rights. For example, members may apply to court where directors pay excessive salaries or give away corporate assets.

The current Corporations Act does not provide members with the derivative action. Yet, the Saskatchewan Act, the Ontario Business Corporations Act, and the former Bill C-21 (federal) include the derivative action.

In developing a proposed framework for reformed/updated legislation in Ontario, the Ministry of Government Services is asking the broader not-for-profit community whether or not a derivative action be included and broadened for Ontario's not-for-profit sector.

Ontario March of Dimes' recommendation is consistent with that of the Ontario Law Reform Commission. The derivative action should be available to other complainants in addition to members – as our recommendation below states, “a donor might not be a member”, but should remain confident that donations are used strictly within the provisions outlined in the corporation's mandate. Our recommendation seeks to increase accountability by ensuring that directors act in the corporation's best interests.

However, we do go beyond the recommendation of the Ontario Law Reform Commission by recommending that the derivative action apply to all not-for-profits.

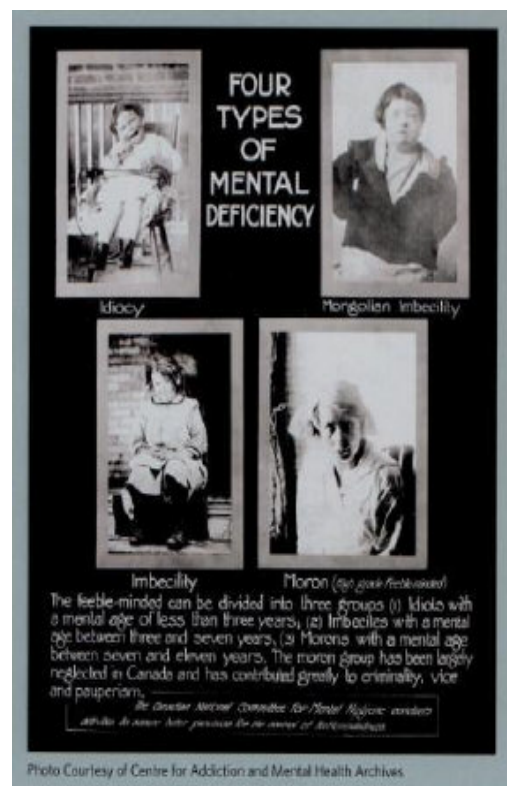
Out from Under: Reflections from the ROM

“Every object has a history. And every history has some relationship to disability. Shovels have been used in conditions of forced industrial labor and to bury disabled people in unmarked graves.”

–Terry Poirier

“Methods have been used to diagnose, categorize and place people by measuring certain kinds on intelligence. In the past those with low IQ test scores were often institutionalized or sterilized”

–Carrie Fyfe



Kristen Ann Inwood died March 13th 1981 because of a deliberate overdose of the powerful heart drugs digoxin, she was 18 days old. In medical slang Kristen had been designed as FLK “funny looking kid”. She was one of 36 infants’ deaths that occurred on the hospitals cardiac ward between June 1980 and March 1981. The

Royal Commission of Inquiry into Certain Deaths at Hospital for Sick Children conducted 191 days of hearings probing the circumstances of these deaths. The conclusion was that Kristen was murdered but unable to make any determination of responsibility. Mr. Justice Grange wrote, "I come to the end, then, attaching no great blame to anyone."

-Cindy Mitchell

Although the exhibit is over, you can still experience the book, *Out from Under*, which pays tribute to the resilience, creativity and civic and cultural contributions of Canadians with disabilities.

Out from Under: Disability, History and Things to Remember (2008), accompanied the exhibition of the same name held at the ROM between April and July 2008, \$24.95 Written by the curatorial team and produced by the School of Disability Studies at Ryerson University it is still available at the ROM Museum Store and at the Ryerson University Bookstore, 17 Gould Street, Toronto.

Accessibility Plans for the TTC



Reviewing Accessibility Plans for the TTC, Canada's largest transit system. Disability Issues Committee, City of Toronto. Warren Rupnarain, Vice-chair of the Committee.

Minister's Briefing, Bill 77: Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008.



Minister's Briefing, Bill 77: Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008. GR staffer, Janet Macmaster, at the Minister's Briefing and First Reading with Hon. Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community & Social Services, Queen's Park. Read more on Bill 77, currently in front of the Committee of Social Policy, in the next issue of The Advocate.



Produced by:
Steven Christianson, Manager, Government Relations & Advocacy

Janet Macmaster, Government Relations Assistant

Andria Spindel, Executive Lead

Warren Rupnarain, Associate Advocate

With contributions from students, Robyn Ord and Courtney Christianson

4NPC Studios, Art Direction & Design

Contact:
jmacmaster@marchofdimes.ca
March of Dimes Canada
Government Relations & Advocacy
10 Overlea Boulevard
Toronto, ON M4H 1A4
Tel: 416-425-3463

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