

# Spotlight<sup>on</sup> transformation

A Developmental Services Bulletin from the Ministry of Community and Social Services

## Message of Thanks From Minister Meilleur

### *Developmental Services Sector Worker Appreciation Day*

January 16, 2008 was Developmental Services Sector Worker Appreciation Day in Ontario. It was the perfect opportunity to officially recognize all the good work that developmental services workers do, and a great day to say thanks for a job well done.

I would like to say it again.

The people who make up the developmental services work force are hard-working. The job calls for a diverse skill set. You have to play multiple roles. Besides being a care provider, you are a teacher, friend, advocate, counselor and entertainer. That's a tall order, but you rise to the occasion, time and time again.

So, I salute all of you. For your commitment and for your desire to help make the province a more welcoming and inclusive place for people with developmental disabilities.

As we push ahead with our long-term plan for developmental services, I feel privileged to have dedicated professionals such as you standing by my side.

Madeleine Meilleur  
Minister of Community and Social Services



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## We're almost there!

### **Third phase of testing the developmental services application package is nearing completion.**

Well over a year ago, we started working with developmental services agencies to test out a new developmental services application package, which includes the Supports Intensity Scale.

What started as a pilot project with five community groups has grown to include 12 community agencies and nearly 2,000 volunteer participants composed of people with a developmental disability, families and caregivers.

When we started the pilot project last year, we decided to test the application package in three phases.

#### *Phase 1*

During February and March 2007, we tested the initial set of questions developed in 2006 with the volunteer participants. Their feedback helped us to change some questions and revise the application package and training process.

#### *Phase 2*

This phase took place from April to October 2007, during which time we obtained a great deal of useful information and insight about the support needs, strengths and priorities of adults with a developmental disability. As a result, we have a better understanding about what works and what needs to change on the application package.

Some of the participants told us that parts of the application are hard to finish. They also said that overall, the application just takes too long to do. So, right now we are working on making the application shorter and more relevant, but still very informative.

The ministry is also working with a research group to test the validity of the information collected in the application package. The researchers provided a report on their results at the end of March.

**For more information  
about the  
*Supports Intensity Scale*,  
go to page 8.**

## Phase 3

The third phase, which got underway in November 2007, has focused on developing a way to predict the supportive resources an adult with a developmental disability will need based on the information from the application.

By the end of March, the third phase was nearing completion. We'll host a final focus group session.

We've also hired a second research group to design and complete a resource use study. From this study, we will develop the model to predict resource needs based on the information from the application package. We'll be working with 11 community agencies to collect the information. The final report will be out in June.

We're in the home stretch with our project and we are pleased with the feedback we've received. You can look forward to receiving more information about this project in the future.

Thanks to everyone who worked with us from the start – self-advocates, community service providers, family members and professionals.

We couldn't have done it without you!

## Testing the application package: By the numbers

### Phase 1

- **15** interviewers from **five** community agencies trained to administer the application package
- Volunteer participants completed **200** applications and **156** feedback forms

### Phase 2

- **Seven** more community agencies, including **one** francophone agency, joined the project
- **33** more interviewers were trained, including **five** francophone interviewers
- Volunteer participants completed **561** applications, including **80** in French

### Phase 3

- Of the **1,200** applications targeted for this phase, **1,100** were completed by the end of March

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## Families to get help in hiring support workers

Ask any employer. Finding, hiring and retaining qualified staff can be one of the biggest challenges facing an organization. Developing hiring policies and procedures and human resources strategies definitely helps. But that can take a lot of time and effort.

### Why we are transforming Ontario's system of developmental services

- To create a more accessible, fair and sustainable system of community-based supports
- To help people with a developmental disability become more independent and self-reliant
- To give families more choice and flexibility in how they care for their family members.

We are doing just that. With our community partners, we are developing and implementing strategies to help families recruit and retain qualified and caring support staff now and in the future. We've put together a panel to look at the issues families may face and to find solutions. The panel is composed of:

- Family members
- Self-advocates
- Independent planners
- Facilitators, and
- Service coordination brokers.

The panel is:

- Discussing issues and solutions that families may face in finding, hiring and keeping staff
- Identifying and developing recommendations on recruitment and retention issues and strategies
- Reviewing literature on recruitment and retention strategies
- Establishing qualification requirements for support workers
- Providing administrative support tools for families
- Developing an implementation plan for the recommended strategies.

Work began in January. The panel will meet every three weeks until the end of June.

Stay tuned!

## Going online to coordinate and manage service access

*Strengthening our Partnerships is a Ministry of Finance program. It provides funding to transfer payment agencies to develop innovative ideas that will lead to better management of information, as well as improve accountability and transparency.*

Thanks to provincial funding under the Strengthening our Partnerships initiative, the Community Services Coordination Network (CSCN) will soon have a web-based application and database to store, trace and report information gathered from the new developmental services application.

CSCN coordinates developmental services requests for five counties in Western Ontario: London-Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, Huron and Perth. The new Developmental Services Information System will let the CSCN:

- Manage waiting lists for developmental services
- Match individuals with available resources
- Track availability and use of existing resources, and
- Summarize information to support planning at the community level.

The system is safe, secure and it protects the privacy and confidentiality of users.

Mobile computer notebooks will allow caseworkers to collect information from clients while in the field (from a person's home for example), and transfer it to a central database. This will mean less paperwork for caseworkers and a minimum duplication of efforts.

The new database has to be tested before caseworkers can start to use it. Once testing is completed, CSCN will try out the system on a sample of individuals and families who are on the waiting list for accommodation supports. The new system is going live in April.

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## Ministry hosts Community Living Toronto art show

Government of Ontario staff got a head start on their Christmas shopping in November when the ministry hosted a three-day art show and sale featuring artists and artisans from Community Living Toronto.

From November 13 – 15, 2007, Queen's Park employees had a wonderful array of works of art to choose from — paintings, jewelry, ceramics, toys and cards — all created by the talented people supported by Community Living Toronto.

Proceeds from the sale went to the individual artisans, Community Living Toronto and the United Way.





“As a ministry, we are committed to providing appropriate opportunities for people with disabilities to contribute to, and participate in, their communities. This event is a model of social enterprise and universal accessibility and illustrates how we work with our community partners to build thriving communities.”

— **Lucille Roch, Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services**  
at the opening of the **Community Living Art Show.**



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## You Asked Us

### Question:

**Where can I get more information about the Supports Intensity Scale?**

### Answer:

The Supports Intensity Scale is a tool used to measure the practical support requirements of a person with a developmental disability. You can find out more by visiting [www.siswebsite.org](http://www.siswebsite.org).

### Question:

**How were the agencies selected to participate in the application package pilot?**

### Answer:

Twelve agencies are participating in the application package pilot. We chose these agencies based on the following questions:

- Does the agency provide a wide range of services and supports to adults with a developmental disability?
- Is the agency required to meet a diversity of client needs, languages, strengths and preferences?
- Does the agency support clients who are living in various residential settings in the community?
- How experienced is the agency in providing services to people who live in a variety of geographic and urban/rural areas?

Several of the agencies chosen also served on the Reference Group on Applications Packages.

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