

Monday November 1, 2004

Dear Colleagues:

In response to the Government's recent announcements regarding its intent to transform the healthcare system, the Ontario Federation of Community and Mental Health and Addiction Programs (OFCMHAP), as part of its *Making Ourselves Heard* initiative¹, partnered with the Canadian Mental Health (CMHA) Ontario and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) to convene a full-day working session on Tuesday September 14, 2004 at the Radisson Hotel Toronto East in Toronto.

The purpose of the working session was to create a forum for members of the mental health and addiction sector to come together to:

- ?? Share information regarding the Government's Transformation Agenda for the health care system and explore the potential opportunities that this new agenda offers the sector;
- ?? Develop a set of principles and strategy governing the mental health and addiction sector's ongoing involvement in and influence on the Transformation Agenda implementation process as it unfolds; and
- ?? Begin to craft advice for the Government and others of influence regarding what the mental health and addiction sector's role should be in the planned Local Health Integration Networks and selected of the other Transformation Projects.

The session was extremely well attended by over 130 members and staff from our three organizations, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care representatives and other invited guests. Thank-you to those of you who were able to participate in what turned out to be a highly productive day. The Working Session served as an excellent starting point for the community mental health and addiction sector to contribute to the on-going planning and implementation of the Government's Transformation Agenda. The ideas generated during the session have and will continue to serve as important input to the development of on-going

¹ In early 2004, the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs launched *Making Ourselves Heard*, an initiative to develop and implement a plan to strengthen the community mental health and addiction sector's capacity to be seen and heard as a critical component of Ontario's health care system. Underlying this initiative is the belief that building the sector's capacity to organize itself to speak and advocate on its own behalf should increase: i) understanding of mental health and addiction services and their role in a strong health care system; ii) the sector's real and perceived unity of voice; iii) political, bureaucratic and public support of the sector; and iv) the sector's ability to pursue and achieve common goals.

advice to the Government as it releases additional information on the Transformation Agenda and as it requests input from organizations and sectors regarding its plans.

Please find attached two documents coming out of the September 14th session. The first document is entitled "Proceedings from the *Making Ourselves Heard* Community Mental Health and Addiction Sector Working Session." This document should be viewed as a reference document that records, based on the information made available up to the date of the working session, attendees' *preliminary* thinking regarding the Government's Transformation Agenda plans.

The second document is entitled "Since the September 14, 2004 Working Session." This document contains work done since the September 14, 2004 working session – a letter to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care drafted following the session, a public statement released in response to the Government's October 6, 2004 announcement, and a response drafted to the Government's consultation questions regarding LHINs, also distributed following their submission. Each of these items was developed using the ideas discussed at the September 14, 2004 Working Session.


Going forward, and as agreed to during the "Next Steps" segment of the Working Session, host organization representatives and members will continue to work together to further develop sector principles, positions and perspectives in response to the Government's anticipated on-going release of information on the Transformation Agenda and requests for input from organizations and sectors regarding its plans.

To support and contribute to this work, please endeavour to keep your host organization representatives informed of information you are hearing about the Transformation Agenda in your local communities, and your communities' ideas and opinions as to how to respond and participate on an on-going basis. Also, please work with other mental health and addiction service providers in your communities to register and participate in the upcoming workshops (scheduled to begin on November 19, 2004) and to develop advice to your local LHINs as they are established. In this way, the community mental health and addiction sector can continue to build on the success of the September 14, 2004 Working Session, developing and providing advice to the Government regarding how to ensure that the Transformation Agenda will benefit people living with mental health and addiction needs, and ensuring that our sector is seen and heard as a critical component of Ontario's transformed health care system.

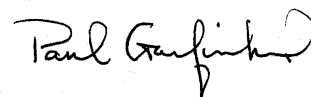
Yours sincerely,



David Kelly
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