



Community-centred primary health care

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OCSA

Ontario Community Support Association

United in our commitment to care



Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs

Sharing Resources, Exploring Common Issues

February 20, 2009

Open Letter to Local Health Integration Network CEOs and Board Chairs

Community Health & Social Services Infrastructure Fund Needed to Bring Services Closer to Ontarians

The opportunity to vastly improve the quality and accessibility of services provided to Ontarians in their communities is behind the work now underway to establish a **Community Health & Social Services Infrastructure Fund (CHSSIF)** in response to the economic challenges facing Ontario. The Association of Ontario Health Centres (AOHC), the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) and the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs (OFCMHAP) ask that you support the establishment of this critical Fund. We have met with the Minister of Finance's Office to ask that such a Fund be included in the March budget.

The **Community Health & Social Services Infrastructure Fund** presents an unprecedented and historic opportunity to put a down payment on Ontario's future community health and social services' infrastructure to meet growing demand, while at the same time creating jobs for workers in small and mid-sized construction and related companies, stimulating the economy in rural and urban communities throughout Ontario.

Under the sponsorship of a Community Health Centre, Community Support Service Agency or a Community Mental Health & Addiction Programs provider, we envision under one roof: community health centres, supportive housing, community support services for seniors and persons with disabilities, community mental health & addiction services, immigrant and refugee services, wellness centres, Aboriginal Health Access Centres – the possibilities are endless and will be determined by communities across the province. Not only will this better serve the needs of Ontarians, especially those facing barriers to accessing service, it also advances the integration goals of the Government and Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) by enhancing community partnerships and reducing the overhead costs for local service providers.

The upcoming **Ontario Budget 2009** offers a timely opportunity to launch such a **Community Health & Social Services Infrastructure Fund** and get Ontarians back to work now. Its legacy will be the foundation for strong, collaborative multi-sectoral initiatives that for years to come will serve the needs of communities across the province. We ask for your support and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this Infrastructure Fund in more detail with you.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Board Chairs, LHINs