

Developmental Services Ontario Hamilton-Niagara Region

Service de l'Ontario pour les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle de la région de Hamilton-Niagara

February 2011

(upon designation)

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Welcome to the first newsletter of the soon-to-be developed **Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) Hamilton-Niagara Region**. This newsletter gives you information about the new DSO Hamilton-Niagara, which will open on July 1st. Updated information will be provided in future newsletters.

Our goal is to publish a regular newsletter. This newsletter is available in both English and French and is posted on the interim website for the DSO Hamilton-Niagara Region at www.contacthamilton.ca

What is Developmental Services Ontario?

Starting July 1st, there will be a change in the way that **adults** with developmental disabilities and their families apply for and receive services and supports. There will be nine Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) organizations across the province, one for each region. The DSOs will be the single point of contact in each region for applying for and getting adult services and supports that are funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services ("Ministry").

The DSOs will:

- ✓ Be the single point of contact for information and application to Ministry funded adult developmental services
- ✓ Apply the new eligibility criteria
- ✓ Use a common application package to assess support needs, so that people are treated consistently across the province no matter where they live
- ✓ Link people to services and supports
- ✓ Administer funding for adults with developmental disabilities.

This is happening because of a new law, called the *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with*

Developmental Disabilities Act 2008.

Access to children's services remains the same as it is now, through the local Contact agencies.

What does this mean for our region?

In the Hamilton-Niagara Region, the DSO will be called **Developmental Services Ontario Hamilton-Niagara Region**. It will serve the communities of:

- ✓ Brant
- ✓ First Nation Mississaugas of the New Credit
- ✓ Haldimand and Norfolk
- ✓ Hamilton
- ✓ Niagara
- ✓ Six Nations of the Grand River.

The DSO Hamilton-Niagara Region will be administered by Contact Hamilton.

What happens between now and July 1st?

It is "business as usual" until July 1st. Right now, access to adult developmental services and supports continues through the local Contact agencies:

- ✓ Contact Brant
- ✓ Contact Niagara
- ✓ Contact Haldimand-Norfolk (REACH)
- ✓ Contact Hamilton.

This will stay the same until July 1st, 2011.

What happens after July 1st?

The local Contact agencies will still provide access to **children's** developmental services and children's mental health services. They will no longer provide access services for adults.

People seeking information or access to services for **adults (18+)** with developmental disabilities will go through the new DSO Hamilton-Niagara. They and their families will be able to call one toll-free number to apply for services and get information. They will be able to meet with staff at local offices or have staff visit them in their home to help fill out the application form.

The same staff member will keep supporting them as time goes on, by answering their questions and helping them deal with changes in their situation. We will also keep working to make the transition from children's to adult developmental services as smooth as possible.

Q: We applied for supports through a local contact agency and we are still waiting. Will we have to apply all over again?

A: No. People who have already applied through their local Contact agency will be asked for their consent to transfer information to the DSO Hamilton-Niagara. We are working on a process for doing this.

Transferring records from local Contact agencies to DSO Hamilton-Niagara

It is important that people that are currently enrolled with their local Contact agency have the opportunity to have their information transferred from their local Contact agency to the DSO Hamilton-Niagara. We want to reduce the number of times people have to retell their information. It will also be very helpful to know what work has been done to date so that we can work as effectively as possible with everyone that is involved.

People that are currently enrolled with their local Contact agency will be contacted by them to sign a form giving consent to transfer their information to DSO Hamilton-Niagara. By law, we must have informed consent. This is to protect people's right to privacy. We will do our best to make sure that information is transferred in a secure and timely way. This will ensure that there is no interruption in services or supports.

How is DSO Hamilton-Niagara getting ready for the changes?

Between now and July 1st, the new organization will work closely with all the local communities and Contact agencies to make sure that the changes go as smoothly as possible. Here are some of the things we are doing:

- ✓ A nominating committee is in place to recruit new members for the Board of Directors of the new organization. New board members will come from local communities to ensure that the organization reflects the needs of people throughout our region.
- ✓ Hiring and training staff.

- ✓ Working with local Contact agencies to make the change as smooth as possible.
- ✓ Learning about and building relationships with local communities.
- ✓ Giving updates through this newsletter and our website
- ✓ Planning to give information sessions across the region.

There is a lot of work happening now to get us ready for July 1st. People may have many questions right now like where the offices will be located and what the telephone numbers are. These are very important questions and we will answer them in future editions of this newsletter as we finalize details.

Learn more about the changes

Please visit the Contact Hamilton website for various links (interim site for information until the new DSO website is in place) at www.contacthamilton.ca.

On this site you will find the following links:

- Our newsletter
- Various sites on the Ministry of Community and Social Services website
- Ministry of Community and Social Services newsletter, called Spotlight
- ***Services and Supports to the Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act 2008***

You can find our newsletters in English and French on the Contact Hamilton website at www.contacthamilton.ca. If you do not have access to the internet and would like the newsletter mailed to you, please complete the form below and mail it to us.

Please mail me the newsletter:

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