

Mental Health Executive

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Division**

# Voice of REASON

M A R C H 2 0 0 5

### UPCOMING DATES

Mental Health Division will be at convention – look for our display April 14-16 at the Sheraton Center

The division will also be at the BPS conference September 16-18 Delta Meadowvale, Mississauga

## Division Executive meets with Director of Mental Health and Addiction Branch

**W**hile still pushing for a roundtable with the Minister of Health, the Mental Health Division met with Carrie Hayward, the new director of the ministry's Mental Health and Addiction Branch on March 4, 2005.

In a wide ranging meeting, the executive raised a number of issues and asked for clarification on recent initiatives.

Hayward made it clear that discussion of mental health's place in the new Local Health Integration Networks was still at a very early stage, despite the consultations that took place last fall. Concerned about the recent reallocation of \$8.1 million of mental health funding to general hospital revenues at St. Joseph's Healthcare in London, Ontario, the executive expressed the concern that mental health funding may suffer a similar fate under the LHIN model.

Hayward insisted that the ministry was paying attention, listing three recent funding initiatives, including \$20 million from the recent Federal Accord for early intervention, case management and crisis response, \$21 million announced for community stabilization and the mental health registry, and the \$27 million re-announced in January for short term crisis beds and court workers.



**Your Mental Health Division Executive** L to R: Odilia Gouveia, Sheryl Ferguson, Jackie Smythe, Geoff McPhee, Doris Meredith, Dave Erskine, Tony Morabito, Marty McFarlane, Bill Playter and Al Donaldson.

She also said there would be an announcement soon regarding a forensic initiative to deal with the court decisions from late last year (see story on page 2).

OPSEU made the point that while new initiatives were putting money into one end of the system, the hospitals were taking it out of the other end. Hayward, when asked how such funding reallocations could take place, indicated that it was her belief that the hospitals had the flexibility in their agreements with the ministry to reallocate funding in such a manner. She also emphasized that the new money was annualized, unlike the reallocations of funding by St. Joseph's, which she said was likely a one-time event.

With regard to divestment, the executive suggested that the shift of mental health to the community

erred in not better using the expertise of the front line staff presently working in the hospitals. Hayward agreed that there needs to be an improvement in the relationship between the hospitals and the community.

At the end of the meeting, the executive reminded Hayward that years of reform have not necessarily delivered a better life for those who now receive their care in the community. They asked her to keep this in mind when setting objectives for mental health. She agreed.

The Mental Health Executive has since written to the director to thank her for the meeting, and have suggested such dialogue take place on a more regular basis. They also asked for her assistance in pursuing a meeting directly with the minister.

Approved for Distribution

Leah Casselman, President



**The Mental Health Division executive encourages all of our members to support the Ontario Health Coalition and the Local Health Coalitions upcoming community forums. Get out there and ensure mental health services are not forgotten**

Ontario Health Coalition Chair Natalie Mehra and OPSEU President Leah Casselman welcome delegates to "Building Links for Mental Health in Ontario."

## **Building Links a Success**

2-day conference Nov. 3-4

On November 3-4, 2004 more than 200 union activists, consumers and community partners participated in a joint OPSEU/Ontario Health coalition conference: Building Links for Mental Health in Ontario.

The symposium was a great success. The Ontario Health coalition came away from the conference with recommendations for action after spending two days listening to the unique concerns raised by participants.

The attendees were entertained, educated and challenged to develop an action plan. They shared experiences to help better understand, for example, what a provincial corrections officer faces when a consumer of mental health services comes into jail. They heard about the options available for employment and treatment in Toronto, and across the province.

The opening night play, "Vincent" moved many to tears.

The agony that families face in trying to get services for their loved ones is insurmountable. Thank you to the members of the Workman Theater Project. The play and the opening chant kept us all focused on why we were there.

## **Local Health Integration Networks**

Non-elected, non-accountable?

The government has announced and implemented Local Health Integration Networks. They are here to stay in Ontario -- at least for the life of this government.

These networks will control all funding for health care across the province. They are 14 non-elected, not publicly accountable networks, made up of government appointees.

Various consultations across the province were attended by OPSEU activists. The activists kept mental health and access to services a priority in each meeting. OPSEU also pushed for Human Resource Adjustment Plans. We encourage you to look up the plan and priority for your region by

going to [www.prioritysetting.ca](http://www.prioritysetting.ca) - password LHIN.

The networks will have the ability and the power to change health care in each community, so check out what is happening in yours.

## **Forensic Patients Keep Pushing**

For Beds and Service

In December 2004 there were two important court rulings indicating the judicial system is finally seeing that jail is not the place for someone with a mental health issue.

In the first ruling, the government was given six months to ensure that enough hospital beds are available that clients no longer have to wait in provincial jails for assessment, treatment or for fulfillment of a court-ordered disposition of 'Not Criminally Responsible' or 'Unfit to Stand Trial.'

The other ordered a hospital to accept a patient immediately, even though there was not a bed and the hospital had concerns about this client coming.

## **In the Works**

Mental Health Division focused on audit, LHINs



The mental health division is working with the First VP/Treasurer Smokey Thomas to pressure the government to audit the books of all

Thomas of the divested Provincial Psychiatric Hospitals to ensure that the "protected" mental health dollars remain protected.

We are also working with the OPSEU health care division to ensure that LHINs don't eliminate work for our members and that mental health needs don't get lost in the reorganization.

The executive continues to seek a meeting with the minister of health. To date we have not been successful in quest for a meeting.

**Reminder: Our treasurer is looking for dues: Locals need to be paid in full in order for delegates to vote at the fall BPS conference.**