

Contact your MPP and municipal councillors

Ontario's regional centres are a powerful resource for people with disabilities and their families. You can help save them! Please contact your MPP and municipal councillors. Urge them to join with us now to keep our regional centres alive and thriving. Please contact these provincial politicians, too:

Sandra Papatello (Liberal)

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For more information

To learn more about regional centres, developmental services, and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, please visit our web site at www.opseu.org.



*Produced by the Ontario Public Service
Employees Union, proudly representing
8,500 Ontario developmental services workers.*

The McGuinty government plans to close Ontario's centres for people with developmental disabilities.

It's a
very
bad
idea.

There is an
alternative.

You can help.

A big mistake

The McGuinty government plans to close Ontario's centres for people with developmental disabilities.

Liberal Minister Sandra Pupatello says regional centres in Blenheim, Orillia, and Smiths Falls will close "faster than you think."

This is a big mistake. Closing regional centres will tear over 1,000 people with disabilities away from their homes, their friends, and the programs and services they now enjoy.

Many clients have multiple diagnoses (e.g., developmentally disabled, mentally ill, physical incapacity) and receive a level of care that is not available in smaller group homes. Others have severe behavioural problems. For them, there is simply nowhere else to go.

Pressure from Community Living Ontario, a lobby organization for group homes, is the driving force behind the closures. Also, the Liberal government still faces a Tory budget deficit – and cutting services for people who can't speak for themselves is a tried-and-true way to cut costs.

There is an alternative

Closing regional centres will leave families and communities scrambling to find new homes and care arrangements for people with developmental disabilities. At the same time, it will force hundreds of trained, experienced staff to quit the developmental services field rather than leave their own communities, homes and families.

There is an alternative to this chaos and disruption.

Centres of Excellence

Ontario could make better use of its regional centres and strengthen community-based services at the same time. By transforming and expanding the centres into "Centres of Excellence," we could use the facilities and staff we have now to work in close partnership with families and community agencies. We could:

- do behavioural and other assessments (e.g., hearing and speech) in the community on an outreach basis;
- provide access to specialized medical services, pharmacies, infirmaries, podiatry, x-ray and psychiatric services, and so on;

- offer program planning services;
- train community staff in medication administration, First Aid, and other essential skills;
- provide apprenticeships and other training opportunities to college students;
- serve as bases and/or training centres for crisis intervention teams;
- offer respite care for family and community caregivers;
- house and treat individuals who need time to stabilize before returning to their families or community placements;
- expand into children's treatment programming;
- work with correctional facilities to treat the hundreds of inmates with developmental disabilities;
- provide palliative care, geriatric care, and care for those suffering from dementia (e.g., Alzheimer's disease);
- and much, much more.

Our regional centres **do** have a role to play in developmental services in Ontario – now and for decades to come.