



# Ontario Peer Development Initiative

The Honourable Michael Tibollo  
Associate Minister for Mental Health & Addictions  
Frost Bldg S.  
7 Queen's Park Cres.  
Toronto, ON M7A 1Y7

June 29, 2022

Dear Minister Tibollo –

On behalf of the only province-wide voice for community-based peer support organizations and lived experience, the Ontario Peer Development Initiative (OPDI) wishes to congratulate you on your recent re-appointment as Associate Minister for Mental Health and Addictions. We have had the pleasure of meeting with you in the past and look forward to continuing our work with you and your team in this new mandate.

As you are aware, peer support organizations (PSOs), also referred to as Consumer Survivor Initiatives (CSIs), are unique community assets which run in parallel with, and in-support of clinical peer support programs. The profile of these organizations, and particularly the “drop-in” nature of their programming, allows them to effectively fill the gap in care where needed. Some highlights of our segment include:

- Operating independently of the formal mental health system by a board made up exclusively of consumer/survivors;
- Non-discriminatory in its service offering, by welcoming people who have not been accepted into the formal mental health and addictions system and those who are sleeping rough;
- Providing a warm alternative to hospitalization, crisis services, increased medication (all of which reduce Ontario's healthcare costs);
- Offering pathways to employment and training opportunities for those looking to return to the community but have been suffering from mental health afflictions (e.g. [A-Way Express](#)); and
- Reduces participants' use of outpatient services and physician visits, thus reducing the workload of these professionals and reducing wait times across the MH&A sector.

In the coming mandate OPDI looks forward to working with you to increase the understanding and appreciation of the network of over 50 PSOs and CSIs currently operating across the province.

Your government has done much for mental health and addictions, and it's a credit to you and your hard-working staff.

We would very much appreciate an opportunity to meet with you and update you on OPDI's work and that of our member organizations when you have settled back into your vital role.

Best of luck for the new term, and we look forward to continued interactions with you and your team.

Yours truly,



Allyson Theodorou  
Managing Director - OPDI

