



## Ontario Peer Development Initiative

Initiative ontarienne de développement favorisant l'aide entre pairs

Supporting Consumer/Survivor Initiatives Throughout Ontario

À l'appui de initiatives des usages survivants à travers l'Ontario

### ONTARIO VOTES 2022

### OPDI UPDATE TO MEMBERS

June 6, 2022

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The Ontario Peer Development Initiative (OPDI), the voice for lived experience and community-based peer and family support organizations in Ontario, congratulates the Ontario Progressive Conservative (PC) Party on their victory in the Ontario general election last week.

With 83 seats, the electorate of Ontario has given the PC Party a strong vote of confidence, and another four-year mandate to execute on many of the initiatives they announced in their budget prior to the election. The OPDI is hopeful that the investments made in mental health and addictions (MH&A) continues, and that the pledged \$204M in additional funding for the “Roadmap to Wellness” strategy will be dispersed in a way that provides much needed help to community-based peer and family support organizations that are in desperate need of resources.

The Ontario Liberal Party gained one seat (from 7 to 8 seats), and does not achieve official party status. This is considered somewhat of a surprise, and a disappointment for a party that was looking to gain enough seats to become the official opposition. Not achieving official party status means that they are not provided with the opportunity to contribute in process related legislative activities such as Question Period, or committees that review bills. It also denies them the public funding that many parties rely on to set up research, fundraising, and other critical functions that would help them in the run-up to the next election. In the face of the results, the Leader of the OLP, Steven Del Duca, resigned, and we can expect this party to enter in to a multi-month

leadership campaign. Currently the leadership candidates are not known, and it will be interesting to see who will want to take up this role.

The NDP's seat count decreased significantly, however, they retain official party status and more importantly, they remain official opposition in the legislature. In the NDP leader's speech on election night, Andrea Horwath announced that she would be stepping down as leader after 13 years and four successive losses. Similar to the OLP, we can expect the NDP to go through a leadership election process in the coming months.

While the PC party has secured another four years in government and the OPDI's advocacy efforts will be principally targeted towards the key offices the Ford government controls, our organization and sector intends to work with all parties, leadership candidates and policy teams to ensure that peer support is known and appreciated in the context of Ontario's MH&A infrastructure.

### **What to expect in the coming days:**

The OPDI anticipates that its work with Ontario Health will continue, and that the progress our segment is making in terms of: a) data collection; b) the setting of a universal standard of care in the peer support segment; and, c) the funding increases needed to address gaps in the system and accommodate the influx of cases. While progress was necessarily "paused" during the election period, things will begin to pick up and accelerate in the coming weeks. The OPDI is confident that the shared goals of government and our segment, and our willingness to partner and cooperate with government, will result in a better system for all.

In the coming days, the OPDI expects there to be a new minister of Health appointed. There will likely be a cabinet shuffle that may or may not result in a new Associate Minister for Mental Health and Addictions. It should be noted that the previous Associate Minister, MPP Michael Tibollo, with whom the OPDI had developed a good relationship with, defeated the Ontario Liberal leader Steven Del Duca last week in the riding of Vaughan-Woodbridge and is eligible to return to that role. Regardless of the outcome of the upcoming shuffle, the OPDI has been proud to work with this administration and looks forward to meeting with and briefing the incoming Minister(s) as they become announced.

## **OPDI Members:**

Now that the election is over, our community-based members have the opportunity to initiate and/or further cultivate relationships with their locally elected officials. Mental health was a big topic in this election, and your MPPs will want to meet with you and better understand the value that you are providing to their constituents in this context. **We encourage all Peer Support Organizations (PSOs) and Consumers Survivor Initiatives (CSIs) to reach out and invite your MPP to meet with you and tour your organization.** Specifically, here are some of the things you can do to help promote our segment and assist in our advocacy for more resources:

- 1. Letter or email of congratulations to your recently elected MPP;**
- 2. Request to meet with your MPP at their constituency office when it is operational (this may take a few weeks if your MPP was newly elected); and**
- 3. Invitation to your MPP to tour your facility.**

To support the OPDI's efforts to increase the profile and importance of peer support within the Ford administration, we would ask that you copy and include the OPDI on your outreach to your local officials. **Our team is here to help you, so please do not hesitate to reach out if you need guidance or support in fostering these relationships.** Together we can make a meaningful impact on MH&A policy and the funding formula in Ontario.