



Ontario Peer Development Initiative

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health
College Park
5th Floor, 777 Bay St.,
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

June 29, 2022

Dear Minister Sylvia Jones –

On behalf of the only province-wide voice for community-based peer support organizations (PSOs) and Community Survivor Initiatives (CSIs) in Ontario's Mental Health & Addictions (MH&A) sector, the Ontario Peer Development Initiative (OPDI) wishes to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Minister of Health and Deputy Premier. We are excited for you to take on this challenging role, and wish you all the best in the upcoming mandate.

As you may know, OPDI represents a network of over 50 PSOs and CSIs across the province. These organizations are unique community assets that 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 it is 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); and
- 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](#)).

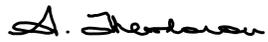
In the coming mandate, we look forward to working with you to increase the understanding and appreciation of our segment of the MH&A sector. Your government has done much for mental health and addictions, and are eager to share more with you about our work.

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 into your new role. OPDI is interested in being a partner for positive change in the sector, and is ready to support the

continued efforts of the Centre of Excellence for Mental Health and Addictions as they work to implement the “Roadmap to Wellness” plan, in the coming months and years.

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

Yours truly,



Allyson Theodorou
Managing Director - OPDI

