



Ontario Division

175 Bloor Street East
Suite 700, North Tower
Toronto, Ontario M4W 3R8
Telephone: (416) 922-6065
Fax: (416) 922-7538
Toll Free: 1-800-268-7582
www.mssociety.ca

VIA E-Mail and Chapter Mail

January 20, 2006

Distribution:

Chapter/ Unit Chairs & Executive Directors
Social Action Directors, Chapters/ Units
Ontario Government and Community Social Action Committee
Ontario Executive Committee & Board
Social Action E-Network
Ontario Client Services and Chapter Operations Staff
(Please forward to other interested members)

Government Relations and Social Action E-Alert

- **Federal Election Update**
- **MS Society Provides Input on Ontario Drug Programs**
- **MS Society Gives Advice during Finance Consultation**
- **AODA Alliance Board Announced**
- **New Accessibility Parking Permit Program**

Federal Election Update

Just a few days to go before the federal election on January 23. The responses from the major parties to the MS Society election questionnaire are posted on the website at <http://www.mssociety.ca/en/involved/socialact/elections-2006-and-you.htm> You can also find the link from the home page at www.mssociety.ca The answers that each of the parties gave to our seven priority questions may be helpful as you determine who to support. In addition, following is a link to the special election edition of ARCH Alert, produced by the ARCH Disability Law Centre. The article beginning on page one details the parties' various disability policies and proposals.

http://www.archdisabilitylaw.ca/publications/archAlert/2006/15_jan16/archAlert_20060116.doc

MS Society Provides Input on Ontario Drug Programs

The MS Society has the opportunity to provide input into the recent consultation of Ontario's prescription drug system including the Ontario Drug Benefit Program. Kris McDonald, Ontario Government and Community Relations Committee (OSAC) member, and Deanna Groetzingler attended an invitation-only forum in late November 2005. In addition, a formal written brief was submitted to the government in early December. The consultation was organized by the Drug System Secretariat, created by the government of Ontario in June 2005 to review Ontario's prescription drug system and make recommendations for

improvement. The brief *Better Health for All: Improving Health Outcomes in Ontario* is posted on the MS Society website at: <http://www.mssociety.ca/ontario/pdf/ont-drugsytemsctr-brief-dec05.pdf> It is also available from a link on the Ontario Division home page: www.mssociety.ca/ontario

MS Society Gives Advice during Finance Consultation

Avril Gunter, member of OSAC and of the Ottawa Chapter Social Action Committee, had the opportunity to present priority MS Society issues at a Minister of Finance consultation on the development of the next government of Ontario budget. With less than three minutes to make key points, Avril focused on the need to support home care. She concluded by saying "It is less expensive and more enabling to care for people in the community rather than in hospitals and long-term care." Many thanks to Avril and the Ottawa Chapter for participating in this consultation on short notice. If other chapters have the opportunity to make similar presentations, please contact Deanna Groetzing at the Ontario Division office for assistance in framing the key messages, as we were pleased to do in conjunction with the Ottawa Chapter.

AODA Alliance Board Announced

Three MS Society members are part of the initial board of directors of the new AODA Alliance, which is following in the footsteps of the ODA Committee. Joining the 19-member group are Joan Gallagher-Bell of Burlington, member of the Halton Regional Chapter; Jim Stinson of Sydenham and a member of the Kingston & District Chapter; and Bonnie Swietek of Timmins and a member of OSAC. Ontarians with MS should be well served by having these terrific volunteers on the AODA Alliance board. The board will have its first meeting in late January, and the AODA Alliance website should be public in February. OSAC member Ian Greaves and Deanna Groetzing served on the transition team during the development of the AODA Alliance.

In other AODA news, Minister of Community and Social Services Sandra Pupatello announced the membership of the new Accessibility Standards Advisory Council on December 13, 2005. You can see the announcement at the Ontario Accessibility Director website: http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/accessibility/en/main/Std_Adv_Council.htm Announcements relating to the membership of the first two standards committees under the AODA are expected shortly.

New Accessibility Parking Permit Program

Minister of Transportation Harinder Takhar announced on December 1, 2005 changes to the parking permit system for people with disabilities. Renamed the Accessible Parking Permit Program, it introduces new technological improvements to the permits to reduce misuse and fraud, cuts processing time in half and establishes new criteria to qualify for the program. The MS Society provided input about the issue during the consultation several years ago. You can find out more about the new program which came into effect January 16, 2006 at the Ministry of Transportation website: <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/vehicle/app.htm>

Government Relations and Social Action E-Alerts Online

The Government Relations and Social Action Alert newsletter is available online. This issue and previous ones are posted to the MS Society website. Just go to www.mssociety.ca/ontario and click on Social Action/ Social Action Alert.

Deanna Groetzinger
Vice-President, Communications
E-mail: Deanna.groetzinger@mssociety.ca

\ont-sa-alert-jan06

To unsubscribe from the Government Relations and Social Action E-Alert list, please send an e-mail with the subject line "Unsubscribe" in the subject line to: Deanna.groetzinger@mssociety.ca