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VIA E-Mail and Chapter Mail

Distribution:

Chapter/ Unit Chairs & Executive Directors
Social Action Directors, Chapters/ Units
Ontario Government Relations and Community Social Action Committee (OSAC)
Ontario Executive Committee & Board
Government Relations & Social Action E-Network
Ontario Client and Chapter Services Staff
Ontario Interdepartmental Staff Group
Ontario Fundraising Managers
Coordinators, MS Clinics, Ontario
(Please forward to other interested members)

Government Relations and Social Action E-Alert

- **Pre-Budget Consultations**
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- **Improved Representation on Standards Development Committees**
- **Government Relations and Social Action Training Workshop**
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Pre-Budget Consultations

The MS Society participated in Ontario's 2008 pre-budget consultation process. The Society prepared a formal submission and appeared before the Minister of Finance in January. The submission called for improved access to home care, age appropriate housing, drug therapies, assisted devices, medical and neurological services, public transportation, and employment for people with MS. To read the full submission, please visit http://www.mssociety.ca/ontario/pdf/ont_2008_pre-budget_submission.pdf.

Age-Appropriate Care and the Aging at Home Strategy

In the fall of 2007, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced the Aging at Home Strategy. Through this strategy, Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) will be provided with more than \$700 million in funding over three years to expand access to home care and community living options for seniors.

Although the strategy appears to be limited to seniors at this time, the MS Society is working with other health charities to persuade government to expand it to include younger people with disabilities or chronic illnesses, who may also require home care services and community living options.

For more information on the Aging at Home Strategy, please visit http://www.lhins.on.ca/page.aspx?id=880&ekmense1=e2f22c9a_72_322_btnlink.

Improved Representation on Standards Development Committees

Cathy Topping, a member of the Ontario Government Relations and Community Social Action Committee, was appointed to the Accessible Built Environment Standards Development Committee (ABESDC). The appointment was made possible through a recent change to the Standards Development Committees membership structure, which states that 50% of committee membership will come from the disability community.

Cathy joins Joan Gallagher-Bell - another strong MS advocate - on the committee. In addition to being a representative on the ABESDC, Joan was recently appointed to also serve on the Accessible Transportation Standards Development Committee. Congratulations to Cathy and Joan!

If you would like more information on the membership selection process, please contact Kim Steele at kim.steele@mssociety.ca. If you want to know more about the AODA and the standards, please visit <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/> and <http://www.accesson.ca/ado/english/>.

Government Relations and Social Action Training Workshop

It's almost that time again! The Government Relations and Social Action Training Workshop will be held in Toronto on **April 26th and 27th**. The workshop is intended for chapter/unit Social Action Directors, Chairs in those chapters/units where there is not a Social Action Director, as well as staff responsible for government relations/social action.

Workshop expenses will be covered for **one attendee** from each chapter/unit, unless there are extenuating circumstances or the attendee requires assistance to attend the event. Please contact Kim Steele in advance of the workshop to discuss any additional attendee expenses.

If you have any questions regarding the workshop and registration, please contact Kim at kim.steele@mssociety.ca or 1-800-268-7582 ext. 2243.

Local Integration Health Network Survey

LHINs present new opportunities and challenges for the government relations and social action work that the MS Society does. To further examine these opportunities and challenges, the MS Society has invited its chapters/units to participate in a LHIN awareness and engagement survey.

The findings of this survey will help us develop strategies to support LHIN engagement activities with our chapters and units throughout the province, to ensure that our collective, province-wide health care priorities and the local health care needs and priorities of members of our chapters/units are represented at the LHIN level.

Please contact Kim Steele at kim.steele@mssociety.ca if you have any questions about the survey.

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