



#### **Ontario Division**

175 Bloor Street East  
Suite 700, North Tower  
Toronto, Ontario M4W 3R8  
Telephone: (416) 922-6065  
Fax: (416) 922-7538  
[www.mssociety.ca](http://www.mssociety.ca)

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**VIA E-Mail and Chapter Mail**

#### **Distribution:**

Chapter/ Unit Chairs & Executive Directors  
Social Action Directors, Chapters/ Units  
MS Ambassadors  
Ontario Government Relations and Community Social Action Committee (OSAC)  
Ontario Board of Directors  
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**

- **Day at Queen's Park**
- **Government Relations Workshop**
- **MS Ambassador Network**
- **Increase in Home Care Hours Announced**
- **Working Together to Leverage LHIN Opportunities**
- **Income Support Campaign**
- **OSAC Recruitment Call**
- **Neurological Health Charities Canada**

#### **Day at Queen's Park and MS Awareness Month Advocacy Activities**

Ontario Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) recognized the "power of the flower" on May 13<sup>th</sup> as awareness events were held at Queen's Park. MPPs wore carnation boutonnières to show their support.

Throughout the month of May, representatives from the MS Society met with MPPs to gain support for the endMS Research and Training Network, the need for improved access to home care, and age-appropriate care. To find out more please visit [http://www.mssociety.ca/ontario/socact\\_2008queenspark.htm](http://www.mssociety.ca/ontario/socact_2008queenspark.htm).

#### **2008 Government Relations Workshop**

The 2008 Government Relations Workshop was held on April 26 & 27<sup>th</sup> in Toronto. Representatives from over 20 MS Society Chapters and Units in Ontario attended the workshop to learn how to include government relations and social action into their chapter and unit activities. An overview of the workshop is available at [http://www.mssociety.ca/ontario/socact\\_govrelwkshp\\_200804.htm](http://www.mssociety.ca/ontario/socact_govrelwkshp_200804.htm).

## **MS Ambassador Network**

MS Ambassador training sessions took place in May and June. Modeled after the Alberta Division's MS Ambassador Network, the Ontario Division program will develop a network of volunteers who will strategically champion government and public relations activities throughout the province.

Over the summer, MS Ambassadors will meet with MPPs in their communities to discuss access to home care and age-appropriate long-term care, access to drug therapies, and support for the endMS Research and Training Network. If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador, please contact Kim Steele, Senior Coordinator, Government Relations at [kim.steele@mssociety.ca](mailto:kim.steele@mssociety.ca).

## **Government of Ontario Announces Increase in Home Care Hours**

The Government of Ontario has increased limits on home care hours. Specifically, the government has committed \$38.5 million to home care and has agreed to:

- Increase the upper limits on hours of personal support/homemaking services by 50 percent, from 80 hours to a maximum of 120 hours in the first 30 days of service, and from 60 hours to a maximum of 90 hours in any subsequent 30-day period;
- Remove home care maximums on personal support and homemaking entirely for patients waiting for a long-term care bed or receiving palliative care services at home;

The MS Society has actively advocated for increased home care and is currently awaiting clarification on whether the increases will apply to all Ontarians who require home care services or just to seniors.

The full details of the announcement, which was made as part of the Government of Ontario's emergency room wait time reduction strategy, can be found at [http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2008/05/30/c6355.html?lmatch=&lang=\\_e.html](http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2008/05/30/c6355.html?lmatch=&lang=_e.html).

## **Working Together to Leverage LHIN Opportunities**

MS Society chapters and units in the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant area are working together to bring the concerns of their community members to the attention of the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN). Representatives from these chapters and units are speaking with members of their communities about their needs and will provide the LHIN with a collective set of recommendations on how the LHIN can better serve people affected by MS.

The chapters and units in the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN are participating in the MS Society's LHIN engagement pilot project, which will focus on coordinating engagement activities in three LHIN areas in which there is a high-density of MS Society chapters/units. Through this project, participating chapters/units will identify and coordinate LHIN engagement activities with other

chapters/units in their respective LHIN areas. The project will ultimately help determine how best to coordinate LHIN engagement activities province-wide.

### **Campaign on Income Support**

The MS Society launched a national online advocacy campaign on income support. Citizens from across Canada have been invited to support the campaign by using an online advocacy tool to email or write their Members of Parliament on three income support issues:

- Make Employment Insurance sickness benefits more flexible to allow people to work part-time and receive partial benefits.
- Make the Disability Tax Credit a refundable benefit.
- Allow spouses to claim the Caregiver Tax Credit – right now this isn't allowed.

To find out more about the campaign please visit

[http://www.mssociety.ca/en/involved/advocacy/advo\\_incomesecure.htm](http://www.mssociety.ca/en/involved/advocacy/advo_incomesecure.htm).

### **OSAC is Recruiting!**

The Ontario Government Relations and Community Social Action Committee (OSAC) is recruiting new members who have a strong interest in politics and public affairs.

Priority consideration will be given to applicants who have a background in government and/or public relations, individuals who have MS and/or who are caregivers of a person with MS, and those who represent MS Society chapters and units. For more information, contact Kim Steele, Senior Coordinator, Government Relations at [kim.steele@mssociety.ca](mailto:kim.steele@mssociety.ca).

### **Neurological Health Charities Canada (NHCC)**

The MS Society has been working with a newly formed coalition of neurological health charities. The NHCC is collaborating on two projects: securing federal support to develop and fund a definitive Canadian population-health study on the social, epidemiological, and economic impact of major neurological conditions; and working with the Government of Ontario to develop a neurological disease, disorders, and injuries prevention and management framework. To find out more please visit <http://www.neurohealthcharities.ca/>.

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