

ONPHA

ONPHA

Board Connections

Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association | www.onpha.on.ca

OCT. 2004



3

Don't Miss the ONPHA Conference Nov. 17-21!

Board Members, there is still time for you to register for the 2004 ONPHA Conference, where we have a dedicated stream of conference sessions to meet your needs!

With 100 different educational opportunities, the ONPHA Conference is *the* place to find up-to-date information, expert advice, shared experiences, international comparisons, inside information, inspiring award winners, and the best networking opportunities anywhere.

Don't miss your opportunity to hear what Ontario's housing ministers John Gerretsen and David Caplan have to say about their housing promises. Or federal housing minister Joe Fontana and the Prime Minister's Cities Advisor Mike Harcourt's vision and plans for affordable housing.

Don't underestimate the benefits your non-profit can gain from what you bring back from the ONPHA Conference! Get revitalized! Enjoy the unique social, celebratory and networking opportunities!

For a copy of the Conference brochure, please contact our office at 1-800-297-6660 or go online to our website at www.onpha.on.ca.

Benchmarking: Here We Go

As the September 30th deadline for feedback on the raw benchmarking data approached, the Ministry's Benchmarking Advisory Team (including ONPHA) worked diligently at establishing a timeline for the benchmarking process--a critical path considered by many on the Team to be ambitious yet achievable.

This is a clear game plan that pinpoints the date when a new set of (corrected) draft benchmarks is scheduled to be released to both Service Managers and housing providers by the Ministry: mid-January, 2005.

A three-month period for providers and Service Managers to work out the kinks in the draft numbers has been scheduled. Service Managers are scheduled to submit final recommended benchmark changes to the Ministry by mid-April, 2005.

Final benchmarks are scheduled to be released by the Minister on June 30,

2005. Benchmarks are to come into force as of Jan, 2006, with your implementation date depending on your budget year.

The Team has established a technical sub-committee (including ONPHA representation) which is analyzing benchmark methodology issues and comments received from Service Managers. The revised methodology will then be applied by the Ministry to corrected baseline data received from Service Managers to generate "draft benchmarks".

ONPHA will be ready with an updated version of our interactive **Benchmark Analysis Tool** to help you crunch these all-important draft benchmark numbers. Preliminary results from our Tool's crunching of the raw data supported what most of us already suspected - that much of the data, which was gleaned from Annual Information Returns submitted in 1997, 1998 and 1999, was not completely accurate.

ONPHA Delivers our Messages to Minister



On Sept 21, ONPHA met with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing John Gerretsen for 90 minutes to tell him about our members' primary concerns: adequate funding and sustainability through benchmark/funding model certainty; improving the SHRA Regulations; adequate capital reserve funding; a (truly) Affordable Housing Program; and regular Ministry consultations with ONPHA.

The Minister seemed to sympathize, saying: "As a [former non-profit housing] board member I can understand it. You [the government] are telling us everything about what we [the providers] should do-- take people from a common waiting list, what rules to follow, where to put our money and who to buy services from. So what's left for [providers] to do-- why not just take it over? No wonder providers are frustrated." It remains to be seen what action will result.

News in Brief

City of Hamilton Privatizes Coordinated Access

The City of Hamilton has decided to replace the Community Housing Access Network (CHAN)-- a non-profit cooperative composed of about 40 local housing providers, agencies and the Community Housing Registry-- with Fengate Property Management Ltd., a Hamilton-based company which manages over \$1.5 billion worth of real estate, including a number of social housing units in the area.

Implementing the Recent Changes to the SHRA Regulations

Can a housing provider that administers RGI for a Service Manager now grant extensions if a tenant household misses the deadline for notifying you of their changes? It would seem that the answer is yes (if you have the standard service agreement with your Service Manager), but make sure your Service Manager knows that you would welcome any guidelines.

Alternative providers have now been granted discretion to forego the annual income verification process when they believe that requiring an applicant or tenant to comply with one is inappropriate under the circumstances, provided they notify the Service Manager.

SHSC Performance Improvement System: an Update

ONPHA is currently awaiting a response from the SHSC on the report we submitted along with CHFC-Ontario on developing a design and implementation plan for the SCHC's upcoming Peer-Based Performance Improvement System. An example of how a performance improvement system could work will be showcased by the SHSC at their booth at the ONPHA Conference Trade Show.

Kingston Holds Affordable Housing Forum

A very successful forum on new affordable housing was held in early Oct, highlighting new development from Denver to Nepean. Minister Gerretsen repeated the commitment that his "government was back in the housing business," and that in spite of the deficit they were going to match the federal dollars for the Affordable Housing Program, while careful not to commit to a time line.

Any progress at senior levels of government?

Will the Province's housing promises be included in the next budget? The Province is adding branches and staffing up to deliver the Affordable Housing Program, making it hard to believe that the Program isn't going to happen!

Housing programs were mentioned in the Oct. 5 Federal Speech from the Throne, so likely there will be further federal funding this year. But unless Ontario starts participating, the money will not reach developers of affordable housing. ONPHA will address the need for a federal protocol to deal with this logjam, as well as the need for a National Housing Strategy and other issues, in our upcoming submission to the House of Commons Committee on Finance.

ONPHA Comments on Province's Plans for Golden Horseshoe

ONPHA's recent submission pointed out that the Province needs to address the sizable capital funding deficit required to maintain our existing social housing, and recognize the importance of affordable housing to successful communities.

Ministry of Health 'Transformation Project' forgets housing

The Ministry of Health/LTC's new 'Transformation Project' is aimed at lowering the cost of hospital services by increasing the capacity and integration of community services to expedite the return of patients to the community. ONPHA's Mental Health and Alternative Housing Committee has pointed out the plan's failure to recognize the need for increased access to supportive housing as a basic prerequisite for community care. ONPHA is following up with the Ministry.

New Development Announced

Niagara Region is planning to build 140 new affordable housing units, with the lion's share in St. Catharines.

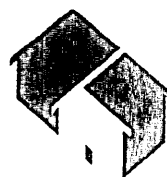
The **City of Hamilton** has approved 3 Transitional/Supportive Housing Projects for funding under the federal government's SCPI Program.

SHSCFI Announces new Managing Director of Investment Fund

Richard Rysak joined SHSC Financial Inc. as its new Managing Director at the beginning of September.

Missed the Capital Reserve Workshops? Get the Guides!

The 4 guides developed for SHSC Financial's Education Program on Capital Reserve Planning, Cash Management and Investing are now available for you to order, either separately for as low as \$20, or as a set of all 4 guides (with software) for only \$50! To order, visit www.onpha.on.ca or call 416-927-9144/ 800-297-6660.



ONPHA