



Community and Health Services Department
Office of the Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

TO: Community Services and Housing Committee Members
York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee Members

FROM: Joann Simmons, Commissioner of Community and Health Services

DATE: May 7, 2008

RE: **New Appointment to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee**

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Regional Chair Fisch to inform you of the appointment of a new citizen member to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC). While York Region's recruitment of AAC members has been extremely successful generally, there has however been difficulty in recruiting members with comprehensive knowledge of cognitive disabilities and mental health issues. This is a complex area that must be better understood in order to support our efforts in implementing the ODA and to effectively address future requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

As per the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, the Regional Chairman is authorized to appoint replacement members. The person appointed by Regional Chair Fisch to the YRAAC is:

Donna Hardaker – Manager of the Mental Health Works Program at the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), York Region with past experience as a policy analyst responsible for accessibility and disability issues including submissions to legislative committees regarding the ODA and AODA. She is currently a member of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) Accessibility Advisory Committee and was a stakeholder advisor to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

The YRAAC assists Regional Council in improving opportunities for persons with disabilities by advising on the implementation of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). The AODA will eventually replace the ODA however, while the ODA and the AODA exist simultaneously, the YRAAC will be required to perform a dual role in York Region.

Under the ODA, the YRAAC is responsible for advising Committee and Regional Council each year on its annual Accessibility Plan, which focuses on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities. Under the AODA, the YRAAC will advise Committee and Regional Council on the Region's compliance with the accessibility standards and in the preparation of accessibility reports.

As a professional and as a person with a disability, the appointment of this new member will be a valuable addition to the YRAAC as it continues its work to assist Council in realizing its vision of providing access to Regional programs and services for all York Region residents.

LD/kn

Copy to: B. Macgregor, Chief Administrative Officer
 L. Bigioni, Director of Government Relations and Executive Assistant to the Regional Chair
 J. Hulton, Regional Solicitor
 C. Abankwa-Harris, Director, Policy and Program Support Services
 B. Bridle, Committee Coordinator