

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

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**Ministère de la Santé
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Sous-ministre adjoint
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January 11, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Behavioural Support Systems Project

It is widely recognized that we have the responsibility as a system to improve our capacity to meet the needs of Ontarians with behaviours associated with complex and challenging mental health, dementia or other neurological conditions living in long-term care homes or in independent living settings. These behaviours have far reaching effects on individuals and organizations in all aspects of the health care system.

We need to do this to create environments where residents can be cared for appropriately and with dignity and respect. These environments must also be a place where staff can feel safe as they work to the best of their ability to deliver quality care. As we improve in these areas there will also be benefits for the system as whole through reduced waits for appropriate long-term care beds, a reduction in unnecessary hospital visits and decreased ALC days in acute care.

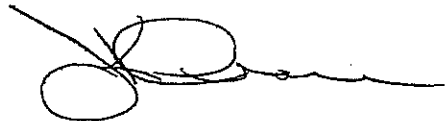
We are therefore pleased to have this opportunity to announce the start of an important initiative called the Behavioural Support Systems (BSS) project which will be lead by the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN in partnership with the Alzheimer Knowledge Exchange and supported by the Ontario Health Quality Council. Many of you have already proposed and are developing strategies and approaches to address the needs of this population and this project will provide the leadership necessary to reach across the province to leverage and build on existing services as well as researching new approaches and best practices.

At this time it is contemplated that the project will proceed in three phases. Funding has been provided for the first phase of the project which begins immediately and will occur over the following approximately nine months. The first phase will focus on defining the population to be served, proposing a system model based on best practices, and establishing an appropriate measurement and evaluation framework. Subsequent phases will test the potential of specific interventions to improve outcomes and will examine how best to scale these up more broadly throughout the system.

Project planning has begun and in the next few weeks you will be hearing about opportunities to participate as well as regular and ongoing project updates. A formal project “kick off” is being planned for February 2010.

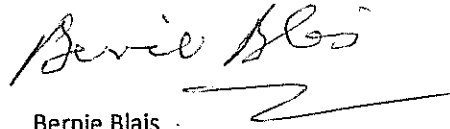
We strongly believe that this work is necessary, important and timely and that the critical factor in the success of this initiative is the ongoing participation of you as leaders both in your organization and in the system. We would like to express our sincere thanks for all your individual efforts to date in addressing these issues and look forward to working together for lasting system change.

Sincerely,



Kenneth Deane

Assistant Deputy Minister
Health System Accountability and Performance
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Co-executive sponsor BSS Project



Bernie Blais

Chief Executive Officer
North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration
Network
Co-executive sponsor BSS Project

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