

## **Riverview Manor**

The Request for Proposal for renovations at Riverview Manor has been awarded to Ed Kaun & Sons Ltd, within the Board's procurement policies. Construction will begin once a contract is in place, with work expected to be completed by July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. Unfortunately, the Northwest LHIN has not approved funding for support staff. We had hoped to have a Personal Support Worker on site to assist tenants with medications, personal care, meal preparation, service coordination etc, in order to prevent unnecessary hospitalizations and long term care placements of seniors in our communities – a much more cost-effective method of service delivery. We will continue to pursue funding and work closely with our community partners, including the Town of Rainy River and the various health and social service providers in our District, to develop "assisted living".

## **Cost Apportionment**

The RRDSSAB hopes to determine if there is double-majority support for a different cost apportionment formula, at its next regularly scheduled meeting (15 April, 2010). We expect to receive responses from all ten municipalities and the three unincorporated areas, before our meeting. We are also waiting for specific elector numbers for each of our unincorporated areas from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC); these are required to complete the process.

## **Impact of Provincial & Federal Budgets**

The federal budget did refer to the carry over of several measures introduced last year for social housing, including the Social Housing Renovation and Retrofit Fund and the Affordable Housing Program. No new funding was announced. Of most significance to our service system, we were very pleased to hear about the Province's commitment to "permanently fill" the \$63.5 million funding gap

caused by the ending of federal funding for child care. To date, however, we have not been informed as to how that will impact our District.

## **Harmonized Sales Tax**

As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, the 5% GST and the 8% PST will be combined into one harmonized tax. While the Province has advised that it is not their intention to cause undue hardship for housing providers and tenants with the introduction of the harmonized sales tax (HST), the tax will increase the cost of many products and services which were not subject to taxation previously. According to the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA), the costs of hydro and natural gas will be impacted, as will services such as legal and audit services. Unfortunately, maintenance and property management contracts will also be affected. We will work closely with our Providers and tenants to monitor the impact of the HST. Our Finance Team will be presenting information on the new HST at our next Board meeting.

## **Workplace Violence & Harassment**

Amendments to the *Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA)* to enhance protections against workplace violence and address workplace harassment are expected to come into force this June. In the recent Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) newsletter, it is reported that Ontario has actually lagged behind several other Provinces in introducing legislation to cover this pressing issue. "The Human Rights Commission reports that 75% of the complaints it receives are workplace-related, and of those, 10% are complaints of sexual harassment."

The new legislation puts the onus on the employer to have a program that includes:

- Assessment of potential risk & control and/or mitigation thereof;
- A policy on workplace violence & harassment;
- Procedures for immediate response to threats;

- Procedures for reporting incidents, threats & complaints of violence/harassment;
- Procedures for investigating reported incidents, threats & complaints; and
- An education program for staff on workplace violence and harassment, and organization policies and procedures.

Workers will have the right to refuse work, if there is a perceived danger. The responsibility for ensuring compliance with the legislation rests with the Ministry of Labour.

## **Human Resources**

There is no Human Resource activity to report this month.

## **IT Support**

Special thanks to Dan Sutton, our new Network Administrator, who has introduced several new time- and money-saving initiatives to the DSSAB. His knowledge and timely interventions are much appreciated by all staff! Well done, Dan.

Respectfully Submitted,

/d Dittaro