

IFCO Citizenship News



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Transformation 'Blueprint' Is Coming!

**Coalition urges its Members
to Use Common Vision to
Assess New Directions**

The Ministry of Community and Social Services will release its long awaited 'Blueprint' for Transformation in May of this year. The Coalition is urging its members and others to use the *Common Vision* document to assess what the government will propose.

Common Vision was created by: the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario, People First of Ontario, Family Alliance Ontario, and the Special Services at Home Provincial Coalition. It highlights the key values and principles that these four groups agree should be central to transformation.

Individualized funding, portability, and independent planning and facilitation are three of the most important ideas in *Common Vision*.

To download a copy, go to
www.individualizedfunding.ca

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Study Sheds Light on Potential for Individualized Funding

'Moving Toward Citizenship' released April 7, 2006

On April 7 the Individualized Funding Coalition released a new study on individualized funding in Ontario. Entitled *Moving Toward Citizenship*, this first study of its kind has created great interest across the province, with hundreds of people going to the Coalition website since the study's release.

The study findings and themes were based on in-depth research at four sites in Ontario that have utilized independent planning and facilitation support along with individualized funding for

a number of years. The study revealed that the role of facilitators was critical to people building a life in community. All four sites stressed the importance of networks and this resulted in very positive outcomes for people in terms of relationships and community connections.

John Lord, Principal Investigator, says the study shows the potential of individualized funding. "Strong values at each site create the foundation for good things to happen, says Lord. He also

notes that families with individualized funding are very active in the life of their son or daughter. Finally, Lord points out that, "The quality of life outcomes are quite impressive and suggest that individualized funding along with proper family and community supports can create a reasonably good quality of life."

The Coalition has presented the study to the Ministry of Community and Social Services and hopes that the Ministry will study it carefully and use its insights as part of its transformation.

Community Engagement Work

Building Capacity for Individualized Funding

The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario continues to do community engagement work in several Ontario communities. Participants at recent IFCO Workshops have been united in wanting their family member or friend to contribute and participate in community in a way that is valued. IFCO is finding that this community engagement work builds the capacity of families and communities for individualized funding.

Over the past few months some themes have emerged from the community engagement work.

Decision Making – in each community parents expressed the need for their sons and daughters (with assistance of family and networks) to be the

decision maker in their own lives.

Funding – people see that individualized funding needs to be flexible and portable. Families and support networks know that this is the best way to meet the social, community and learning needs of their family members or friends.

Mentoring – families want to have the opportunity to share their knowledge, and experience with other families. People First groups also need the financial and advisory support necessary to enable them to mentor and advocate.

Person-directed Planning – families and support networks want the experience of an independent facilitator to assist them with their journey. With this resource they would be

better able to assist their family member or friend to create a meaningful life in community.

Citizenship – all communities have expressed how important it is for people with disabilities and their families to have in place the support and infrastructure they need in order that individuals can take their place as citizens in their communities

Common Vision – the Common Vision has become the "people's document." It is based on what is important to local people, and it supports the hopes and dreams they have for their family member. Families and support networks reiterate the need for clear values and principles to guide the transformation process.

Professor Says Passport Program Misses the Boat **Opinion Piece**

I have serious questions about the Passport program currently being proposed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). According to government sources, MCSS hopes to phase in individualized funding, by starting to fund only day supports and by also making the program eligible to people receiving formal services.

During the last decade, I have done extensive research about new paradigm approaches, and was an advisor on the recently published study on *Moving Toward Citizenship: A Study of Individualized Funding in Ontario*.

Individualized planning and funding is a new paradigm approach. Day supports are part of the old paradigm, in every way. People's lives should no longer be slotted into day programs, or any other program for that matter. The recent study on *IF in Ontario* showed that people build their lives in community around their strengths, interests, and opportunities, not around day supports. A holistic approach is central to the new paradigm because it respects all aspects of a person's life, including people's strong desire to create a home in community.

I am also concerned with the proposal to make Passport dollars available to people who already have extensive formal services in their lives. In terms of eligibility, service providers receive block funding as transfer payment agencies. They should be encouraged to be creative with these resources, not dip into an individual resource that should be designed for people who want to work outside the traditional system. In jurisdictions that have effective individualized funding programs, they exist parallel to conventional agency approaches, not meshed with

the old. If Passport is to contribute to transformation, planning must precede funds allocation, and new mechanisms must be created to make it work, separate from existing access mechanisms.

Hopefully the new study and other research will encourage the MCSS to re-think the Passport idea. If the Ministry truly wants to phase in individualized funding, it would make more sense to do this by funding a smaller number of individuals related to their entire lives, not just their 'day'.

**Peggy Hutchison, Professor
Brock University**

Individualized Funding Coalition Deeply Concerned

Why are so many people with disabilities living in nursing homes?

Nursing homes and other Long Term Care (LTC) facilities are intended for people who are approaching the end of life. Such supports are increasingly being used for people who are in the last years of life. Last year there were 70,000 people in 600 nursing homes, where the average age is 86.

Why are young people with disabilities being placed in nursing homes and in record numbers?

From 2000 to 2005, admissions for people with disabilities (under 65 years old) increased at more than twice the rate compared to admissions for older adults. This has resulted in the population of people under age 65 increasing 157%, from 2,600 to 4,100.

As a recent national study has shown, we are talking about individuals, many of them in their 20's, 30's and 40's, who happen to have some kind of

physical and/or other disability and thus require assistance with various activities of daily living such as with dressing, meal preparation, getting in and out of a wheel chair, and so on. These are things that are routinely accomplished by people living in the community and are generally not considered as requiring nurses or residence in a nursing home. This alarming rate of admissions is a direct result of inflexible and essentially arbitrary limits set out in Ministry of Health and Long Term Care policy.

The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario is deeply concerned about this trend. Current Ministry policies are inconsistent with community and human values, and also contrary to stated government intent to support people in their homes. Many other provinces will fund up to 180 hours per month of community care in order to help a person avoid

otherwise unnecessary institutionalization. Yet the customary maximum in Ontario of 60 to 90 hours is resulting in a growing number of active adults being forced into nursing homes against their will.

Ontario government documents from the early 1990s acknowledge that a small portion of the population do require higher levels of support than what has been available to them in the community. The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care already demonstrated that unnecessary institutionalization can be avoided by funding programs such as the Direct Funding Project, Supportive Housing, and Outreach Attendant Services. However these initiatives are limited to a fixed number of clients, the programs are full, and have not received expansion dollars.

People with disabilities do not belong in LTC facilities; this is

“Inclusion is both a process and outcome that enables every citizen to participate and belong in all settings in their communities.”

Common Vision

no place for active citizens. A zero entry policy into nursing homes for people under 65 must be implemented immediately. We suggest an implementation group that includes people with disabilities and others from the community who already know how to support people with complex needs. We also need expansion of individualized funding for a broader range of the disability population to be implemented now.

**Tim Kinney, Ontario
Federation for Cerebral Palsy**