

August 1, 2019

Dear Parents/Caregivers

On July 29, 2019, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services announced that actions will be taken to redesign the Ontario Autism Program (OAP). This redesign will build a needs-based program that provides children and youth with the supports they need to thrive. The goal of this is to help as many children as possible. An Autism Advisory Panel has been assembled and will examine results from surveys, town hall meetings, written submissions, as well as, consider evidence, science and data and will put forth its recommendations by the end of the summer. Additionally, families who are currently part of the OAP may continue to receive services outlined in their Behaviour Plan until its end date and then renew for an extension of up to six months at their current level of intensity or less where clinically appropriate without any gaps in service.

During this time, our staff are prepared to meet with families, build clinical treatment plans and begin supports as soon as families are financially able to do so. We are hopeful that a needs-based system will better support the families and children who are part of the OAP and hope that this system will lead to an increase in some of the more intensive therapies that can be most effective for children and youth with complex needs. As we wait for the recommendations from the Ontario Autism Advisory Panel in the Fall, Bethesda will continue providing services and supports to those already in service as well as through a fee for service model with the same care and compassion that the Niagara region has come to know.

For more information about the changes to the Ontario Autism Program, please refer to the Ministry website below:

https://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2019/07/ontario-is-working-towards-a-needs-based-and-sustainable-autism-program.html?_ga=2.204618320.1799245996.1564594417-106003503.1564594417

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 905.684.6918 option 2.

Sincerely,



Brian Davies
Chief Executive Officer