

# **OARTY believes enhanced transparency and accountability within the child welfare sector will pave the way for more effective care and treatment**

MARKHAM, February 26, 2016

The Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth (OARTY) has advocated for systemic changes to the child welfare system in the province for many years. OARTY believes that enhanced transparency and accountability within the child welfare sector will pave the way for more efficient and effective care and treatment for our children and youth.

The recently released review of the province's Serious Occurrence Reports (SORs) by the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth raises important questions about the effectiveness of these reports as a safeguard for children and youth in residential care. OARTY and its member agencies strongly support the recommendation contained within this report to create an electronic database, accessible to service providers, the public, children's aid societies, and the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth that centralizes serious occurrence reporting and allows for robust reporting. This type of database will allow for increased transparency and continual monitoring of trends and best practices in residential care.

We also support the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth's recommendations around ensuring greater consistency in Serious Occurrence Reporting, both in the forms and categories used to report these incidents, and in the information provided. Serious Occurrence Reporting should be consistent across the province.

OARTY would welcome the opportunity to participate in roundtable discussions about the restraint of young people in residential care, and looks forward to working with its partners in residential care to ensure that consistent policies, procedures, and practices are in place in all settings to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children and youth in care.

*"OARTY and its member agencies support the recommendations made by the Provincial Advocate of Children and Youth in his recently released report on Serious Occurrence Reports", said Rebecca Harris, Executive Director of OARTY. "The creation of an electronic database, accessible to all stakeholders, that centralizes serious occurrence reporting and allows for robust reporting will increase transparency in the sector, allow for the identification of trends and best practices, and contribute to continuous quality improvement. It is our hope that these recommendations will lead to more consistent policies and procedures around serious occurrence reporting and increased collaboration between the sectors."*

OARTY member agencies are highly effective, committed to increased accountability and standards, and could be utilized more effectively to provide treatment and care to many of the children and youth in need of residential placements in the province. *"OARTY advocates for higher standards and accountability for the residential care sector and reiterates its longstanding recommendation that the Province make greater use of the services that already exist in the private sector to ensure that families, children, and youth have access to high quality care in a reasonable timeframe,"* said Bob Connor, President of OARTY. *"We are committed to continuous quality improvement and strongly support the recommendations to provide access to data and to ensure consistency in policy and practice throughout the province."*

OARTY recognizes the need for fundamental change for the betterment of the sector and looks forward to continuing to work with government and stakeholders to ensure that families, children, and youth have access to the support and services they need to succeed.

## **About the Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth**

The Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth (OARTY) is a provincial association of private residential services, made up of:

- residential treatment centres (2 centres with 200 children)
- community group homes (150 homes with 2,000 children)
- treatment foster care (400 homes and 1,200 children)
- Day treatment, tutors, mentors, life skills training and supervised independence apartments and section 23 classrooms

Last year, OARTY's member agencies provided over 695,000 days of care to more than 2,500 children and youth.

Services are funded on a per-diem basis by the Ontario government, through a variety of agreements with transfer payment agencies (TPAs). The all-inclusive per-diem rates are set by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) when a home opens. Like all agencies in Ontario providing residential services, OARTY agencies are sanctioned and licensed by MCYS under *The Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information on OARTY please see our website: [www.oarty.net](http://www.oarty.net) or contact:

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