

Bridging Silos, Creating Connections

Spotlight on the Ontario Episodic Disabilities Network (OEDN)

Information Sheet #2 *



What is an Episodic Disability?

Episodic disabilities are lifelong conditions such as HIV, multiple sclerosis, lupus, arthritis, diabetes and some forms of mental illness. People living with episodic disabilities may experience periods of good health that may be unpredictably interrupted by periods of illness or disability, which can lead to challenges related to community and employment participation, income security, social inclusion and access to care.

What is the OEDN?

- The **purpose** of the OEDN is to identify and advance issues and needs of people living with episodic disabilities from a cross-disability perspective within Ontario.
- Led by the **Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation (CWGHR)**, the OEDN provides an **innovative forum** that enables the coordination of episodic disabilities initiatives in Ontario.
- **Rather than work in silos**, the OEDN brings together a diverse range of partners to collaborate on research, advance public policy and promote broad integration in order to strengthen activities related to episodic disabilities in the province.

People living with disabilities have a right to participate fully and equally in Canadian society.

Why Was the OEDN Established?

The **overall goal** is to increase the engagement and capacity of Ontario to improve the quality of life and promote the social inclusion of Ontarians living with episodic disabilities.

To minimize duplication and maximize resources, CWGHR has taken the lead in connecting a wide range of stakeholders working to advance the priorities of people living with episodic disabilities.

Building on its pioneering work at the national level – namely the National Episodic Disabilities Network (EDN) – CWGHR has transferred this successful model to address Ontario’s specific needs and identify and advance key priorities.

A key priority of the OEDN is to focus its efforts on the integration, coordination and streamlining of income support programs and policies offered by the various government jurisdictions to make it less challenging for people living with episodic disabilities to navigate the existing maze of policies and programs.

“A Job, a Home and a Friend”:¹ OEDN Key Priorities

Employment and income security

Adequate and accessible housing

Reduce stigma and discrimination

Quality care, services and programs

Health promotion and wellness

¹ From Employment Works! at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

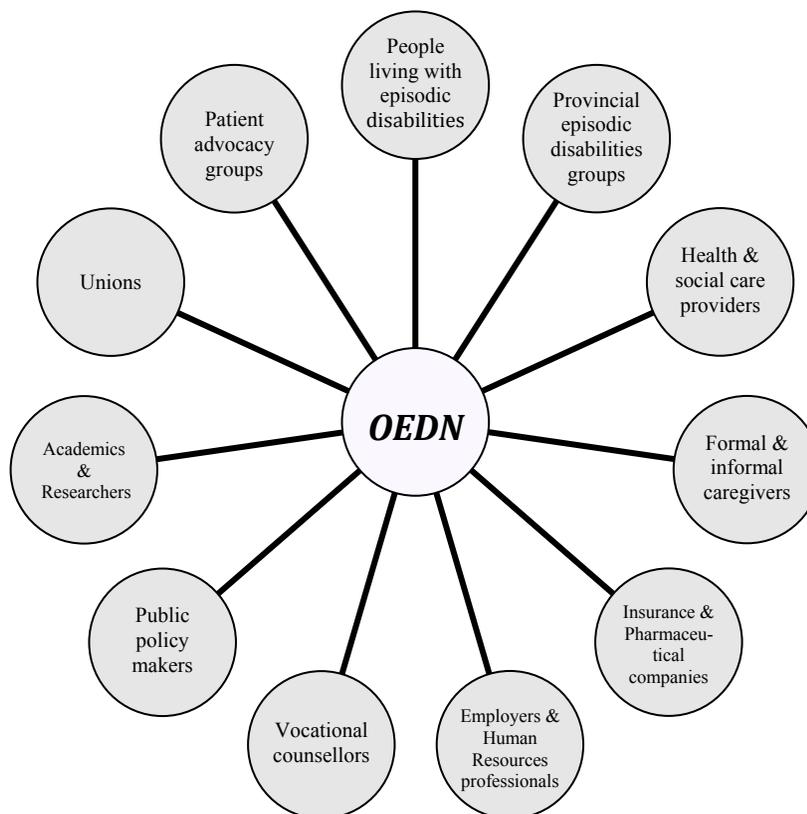
The Real Life Impact:

“Information about workplace programs or government support is difficult to get and often conflicting and confusing.

Accessing it during a period of exacerbation can seem overwhelming. *The barriers are still there*” – Person living with multiple sclerosis.

Who is Involved in the OEDN?

Reflecting the collective interests of Ontarians living with episodic disabilities, **the OEDN connects:**



The OEDN Includes Participants From:

- AIDS Committee of Toronto • Arthritis Community Research and Evaluation Unit • Bridgepoint Health
- Canadian Abilities Foundation • Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance • Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation
- Mental Health Commission of Canada - Knowledge Exchange Centre • Human Resources Professionals Association
- Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, Ontario Division • Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs • Open Policy • The Arthritis Society

To join the OEDN or for more information, please contact:

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