

## Algoma District services Administration Board

### CAO Report - October 1999

This month's report will focus on the issue of Area Services Boards (ASB). The report is supplemented by a document setting out a possible ASB implementation plan for the Algoma District Services Administration Board area and another document which contains key extracts from the Northern Services Boards Act. The issue of Land Ambulance delivery is linked to the ASB issue. Service management for Land Ambulance is discretionary for a DSSAB but mandatory for an ASB.

Since the Algoma Board committed, in April 1999, to review discretionary service management for Land Ambulance in October it was felt that the ASB issue also needed to be discussed. Decisions reached concerning moving towards an ASB will impact on any decision related to Land Ambulance.

This report draws heavily on a presentation by Mr. Aime Dimatteo, Director for the Northern Services Implementation Project (NSIP). Mr. Dimatteo gave a presentation at the Oct 7, 1999 meeting of the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA). The topic of his speech "Steps to Creating an Area Services Board" was of considerable interest to the eleven service delivery groups in the North. Staff from the Ministry of Community and Social Services were also present and provided valuable information related to the topic.

Mr. Dimatteo provided an historical background to ASBs. This is not repeated in this report as it is covered in the draft ASB Implementation plan. He noted that the ASB development process is being overseen by an ASB Inter-ministry Committee established by MNDM. This ASB Inter-ministry Committee will provide planning and implementation guidelines for the creation of ASBs. The group will provide

information sessions and ultimately oversee the creation of the ASBs. It was clear that ASB creation depended on ensuring responsible, effective and efficient delivery of services which fall under the mandates of several different Ministries. Although MNM is leading the process, the other Ministries have to be assured that the resulting ASB delivery agent is capable of effective, viable service delivery. These Ministries will have a say in the ASB approval process.

In order to ensure the above a series of principles have been agreed to.

The Statement of Principles are as follows:

## **Statement of Principles**

- Area Services Boards (ASB) will have clear responsibility to meet legislated and contractual obligations respecting provincial policies and standards and be accountable to local taxpayers, under the Northern Services Improvement Act, 1998, for the effective and efficient management of the services consolidated within the proposed service area.
- Services will be accessible to the public, with service management boundaries that are easily understood, take language and culture into account, and make sense in terms of existing transportation and communication patterns.
- Service management boundaries will be defined so as to allow for effective strategic planning for the affected areas, and should be compatible where feasible with the existing boundaries used for planning and management of area wide services.
- Where service management areas include unincorporated areas, residents of those communities will have a say in how those services are managed.

- The efficiencies already achieved through the consolidated delivery systems that currently exist will be recognized and built upon.
- To ensure a smooth transition, the implementation of an ASB proposal will proceed only after the District Social Services Administration Board(s) covering the area under consideration: has been designated under the Ontario Works Act, 1997; has assumed responsibility for sole support cases transferred from the province; and has developed a plan for child care services.
- The establishment of an ASB will ensure program integrity is maintained for consumers of existing service systems and will result in minimal disruption for consumers.

A document setting out the process to be followed to establish an ASB is under development. It should be available shortly. It is clear that there will be a rigorous process which must be followed to ensure continuity of service delivery.

The taxation models for the ASB were also provided. I have not dealt with them in this report as they were previously described when the ASB plan was being developed in Algoma.

The presentation was well received by all of the participants at NOSDA. A question and answer period followed.

In response to a question about the role of the existing DSSABs the following comments were made. A DSSAB can not directly apply to become the ASB. A double majority vote of the municipalities in the planned ASB area is the method set out in regulation for determining local support for an ASB. However, it would be appropriate for an existing DSSAB to work with its members to discuss and develop an ASB. The building on the success of existing DSSABs is spoken to in several of

the principles. It was noted that DSSABs were seen as logical stepping stones to the creation of an ASB.

It was confirmed that there is no regulated minimum size for an ASB. However, the ASB must show that the delivery area proposed would create viable effective delivery areas for the mandatory services. It was noted by MCSS staff that some of the existing DSSAB areas were at the lower end of viability based on population for delivery of Ontario Works and Child Care. They also noted that a proposal to form an ASB in a portion of an existing DSSAB area would be objected to if the remaining area external to the new ASB boundaries ceased to be a viable delivery area.

It was clarified that although there were six mandatory ASB services it was possible to become an ASB with less than the full complement of mandatory services. The ASB implementation plan could allow for the scheduled assumption of service management for mandatory services after formal ASB approval. The Minister will have the authority to defer the implementation of services.

It was also noted that the ASB Act has a sunset clause of March 31, 2002 for approval of ASBs. It was confirmed that the formation of an ASB is voluntary.

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