

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE OTTAWA LEGAL CLINICS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT!

As we continue to work together, the Steering Committee wishes you a happy 2017!

GOING INTO THE HOME STRETCH

AIMING FOR APRIL 1 AMALGAMATION

As we begin the new year, the final preparations are underway to complete the transformation project and amalgamate the three participating Ottawa clinics. The project is on target to complete the amalgamation on April 1, as planned. The Steering Committee has affirmed its confidence and satisfaction that the process is on track and achieving what it set out to accomplish.

There are several legal and administrative tasks that must be completed before the amalgamation takes place.

A TRANSITIONAL BOARD

The Board of Directors will consist of twelve volunteer community members and one staff member.

The three clinics' current Boards of Directors have selected their candidates for nomination to the Transitional Board of Directors; and staff members have selected their representative for nomination to the Board.

In January, the three current Boards are meeting to:

- Approve the Application for Letters Patent of Amalgamation
- Approve an Amalgamation Agreement
- Approve the draft Operating by-law
- Nominate the 13 Directors for the Transitional Board of Directors.

SPECIAL MEMBERS' MEETINGS

In late February or early March, the three clinics will hold special members' meetings to confirm their Boards' decisions about amalgamation.

AFTER AMALGAMATION

If all continues according to plan, the amalgamation will be formalized when we receive government approval of our Letters Patent of Amalgamation. The new Transitional Board of Directors will then formally meet for the first time,

followed by a special meeting of the amalgamated clinic's membership.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

A thorough campaign has been undertaken to update our partner organizations, as well as local elected officials at all levels of government, and to receive feedback on the process so far. The feedback has generally been positive, with agencies maintaining interest in the project as it moves forward. They have expressed particular support for the proposed “no wrong door” approach that would improve legal clinic services for their clients.

MANAGING INTAKE

One of the logistical challenges of operating one legal clinic having three offices and a “no wrong door” approach is to integrate existing intake processes without disruption to clients or staff.

The Steering Committee and clinic staff have been working with Legal Aid Ontario, testing intake approaches and discussing updated phone systems to hopefully make the transition seamless, so that from day one, the process of welcoming clients and connecting them with our services will work smoothly.

The tests have been encouraging and the clinics anticipate the transition to be successful.

In the short term, changes to our phone system will allow callers to continue using our existing phone numbers to access our offices.



TRANSITION PLAN

With the planning work mostly done and the implementation underway, our consultant Public Interest has completed a Transition Plan for our Steering Committee. It presents the history and analysis of the project, and lists the remaining steps to be carried out. The report commends the clinics on their professional and collaborative efforts, and may be available to potentially assist other clinics considering a similar model in the future. The Transition Plan will be posted to the clinics' websites.

The delivery of the Transition Plan concludes Public Interest's involvement with the project as planned. The remaining activities will be carried out directly by the clinics with the guidance of the project's Steering Committee.

To learn more, please visit www.ottawaclinics.ca.
To contact us, please email info@ottawaclinics.ca.