MEMBER COMMUNICATION

To the attention of the Clerk and Council  
November 24, 2008

Government Releases  
Draft Information and Communications Standard

Issue: On November 11, 2008, the Government released the Initial Proposed Accessible Information and Communications Standard as part of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The standard has been released for public review and comment.

Background:

The AODA, 2005, requires the Minister of Community and Social Services to develop accessibility standards that will remove barriers for people with disabilities. The standards are expected to apply to the public sector, including all municipalities in the Province, as well as the not-for-profit and private sectors. They will address a full range of disabilities including physical, sensory, mental health, developmental and learning and will be implemented in phases leading to full accessibility in Ontario by 2025.

Once completed, the standards will be introduced into legislation and therefore will become mandatory and enforced by the Province.

The proposed standard for accessible information and communications was developed by an external Information and Communications Standards Development Committee (SDC). This external committee included representatives from the disability community as well as the public and private sectors. The SDC’s initial proposed standard is now posted for public review and feedback. The initial proposed standard does not necessarily reflect the point of view of the government.

The public review period to make comments on the SDC’s Initial Proposed Accessible Information and Communications Standard is from November 17, 2008 to January 16, 2009.
Once the public review period is over, the standards development committee will reconvene to consider your feedback. They may make changes to their initial proposed standard based on the feedback prior to finalizing a proposed standard for submission to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Those interested in reviewing the SDC’s proposed standard or participating in the accessibility standards development process can find more information on the Ministry of Community and Social Services’ website at:

*English:*
http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/accessson/business/information/

*French:*
http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/mcss/french/pillars/accessibilityOntario/accessson/business/information/index

Public consultation sessions will be conducted across the province. To participate in a consultation session, to request a document in an alternate format, to find out about alternate methods of providing feedback, or for any additional information regarding the public review process, please call 1-888-482-4317 or toll-free TTY 1-888-335-6611, or email public.review@oliverwyman.com.

**Action:** AMO is urging its members to review the proposed standard and to provide comments to the Government. AMO will be developing a response to the standard outlining municipal issues and concerns. The response will be shared via an ALERT shortly.

*This information is available in the Policy Issues section of the AMO website at www.amo.on.ca.*