

BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS



2023

DUFFERIN AREA FAMILY HEALTH TEAM AND NORTH PEEL & DUFFERIN COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

**Award: Spotlight Award
Achievement: ODSP Clinic**



In 2019, Dufferin Area FHT (DAFHT) joined forces with North Peel & Dufferin Community Legal Services (NPDCLS) to offer patients with disabilities their services in preparing applications for the Ontario Disability Support Payment (ODSP) through a clinic that has been an ongoing success.

DAFHT realized that legal problems often impact health and its social determinants through increased stress, anxiety, lack of finances impacting access to medication, stable housing, adequate nutrition, etc. Conversations with NPDCLS led to organizing a well-attended workshop focused on providing guidelines and advice for effective ODSP applications with DAFHT physicians and nurse practitioners.

Establishment of an on-site ODSP clinic followed, staffed by a DAFHT social worker and a legal team member who assist patients in successfully accessing disability support benefits. The application required by the province is complex and providing expert assistance has become a

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vital service to patients and a helpful support to physicians. The participation of a social worker lowers the concern for patients who aren't comfortable with lawyers.

More than 100 patients have received assistance at the clinic, and in 2022, the clinic achieved an 85 per cent success rate with the applications that received this assistance. Experience has improved both the success rate – from 71 to 85 per cent -- and the efficiency of the consultation process. The partners, including all DAFHT social workers, have also learned more about ODSP through this ongoing process and are proud to help patients obtain valuable financial assistance.

DAFHT team members have discovered and attest to the benefit of partnering together with local community legal services to support patients whose health and well-being is impacted by financial need or legal challenges. The partners continue to share their expertise with other healthcare professionals through workshops and presentations and encourage patients to attend the clinic.

Key Facts:

- ODSP clinic has assisted more than 100 patients.
- As of 2022, it achieved an 85 per cent success rate with ODSP applications, up from an initial 71 per cent.
- Supported 30+ physicians with guidance and tips for completing their portion of the ODSP application.
- Offers presentations/workshops about ODSP to physicians, nurse practitioners, occupational therapists, mental health therapists, etc.