

NEW

Directions

March 13, 2008

Helping the ministry's *stewardship* culture take root



Debbie Fischer, ADM of Transition, sat down with NEW Directions in the second of a series of conversations on the ministry's transition to stewardship.



As we continue to design and implement our organization, the demands generated to work in a different way will change our old culture, said Debbie Fischer, Assistant Deputy Minister of Transition.

"To take on the stewardship role, we needed to start making structural and process changes to support the ministry's day-to-day operations," Fischer said. "But structure is only the framework. It is essential that a cultural shift take root and flourish. How we work is as important as what we do."

Taking the initiative to learn how to work in a stewardship environment

This calls for forging partnerships and connections so that everyone is aware of the big picture and making effective decisions to guide the health care system. "The ministry needs to continue to build the confidence and trust at all levels to work effectively and form new formal and informal cross divisional networks or teams," Fischer said. "It's important for us

all to recognize that the team job is our day job now. It isn't something that gets in the way of our work. It *is* the ministry's work."

"Cross functional teams and cross divisional networks will be pivotal to how work is carried out across the ministry as well as with external partners. To work effectively in this manner requires fundamental changes in workplace processes and values that replace notions of hierarchical control with collaboration and partnership," Fischer said.

"People have been asking for tools to support this new way of working, and members of the transition team are actively working to respond to this need." New initiatives targeted to support the 'how we work' in our new structure are planned to launch this spring. These include:

- Development of a web-directed kit and standardized project management templates and tools to help members of a team define their roles and joint accountabilities, project status, risk-and issues-reporting tools and processes.

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- Coaching for support teams working on cross functional, high-priority projects.
- Launching a web-based list of cross functional teams and their membership.
- Launching the new one-stop staff directory, now housed on INFOweb, on the public website on March 31, 2008. The one-stop directory makes it easy to find information about the ministry's new organizational structure and staff contact information, supporting our ability to connect with colleagues.
- Stewardship competency-based learning programs, such as Critical Thinking and Project Management, will continue as well as the popular FYI series, led by subject matter experts.

In 2008, the ministry also will be bringing the stewardship principles and working approaches that senior managers learned last year in the Stewardship in Action Leadership Program, to employees at every level of the ministry. "We'll introduce a specialized learning program for all staff that is modeled on the very successful leadership and development program that was launched for SMGs in 2007," Fischer said. The objective of the program, which will run through 2009, is to give employees a better understanding of what is expected of them in their role as stewards of the health system and the new way work will be done day-to-day. This program will be customized to each division and will start with learning modules and continue with hands-on application of the training.

"It was important to get senior management in place and trained so that they could shape and lead the transition and the cultural change. Now, we need to offer that same type of training to all levels of the ministry." More details about the new learning program will be available in April.

"Have we changed the culture? No, it's not there yet. Many of the old informal networks have changed and we need to build some new ones. But, I hear from people who are excited about the chance to work with colleagues from different areas of the ministry. They're building new relationships, learning from each other's expertise and sharing accountability for reaching project goals."

"With the proper supports in place and the commitment of staff at all levels, I am confident that together we will create a thriving environment to support the way we conduct our stewardship work," Fischer said. ■

Stewardship approaches and qualities

- Listening effectively
- Engaging colleagues
- Asking meaningful and probing questions
- Understanding decisions aren't made in isolation
- Appreciating the ministry's work is interrelated
- Breaking down silos and vertical thinking
- Questioning assumptions
- Tapping into the talent resources across the ministry



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Learning and Development

In the Learning and Development section you will find a comprehensive easy-to-use index of learning and development opportunities and related resources that are available to you from across the Ministry, the OPS and elsewhere. This page will enable you to access these opportunities and resources from one location.

The section is organized with an index below that lists a link to each learning category. Each link will take you to a page with further information about that category. If you have questions or comments about this Learning and Development page, send them to viewpoint@moh.gov.on.ca.

- [Stewardship in Action Programs](#)
- [Building Stewardship Through Competencies](#)
- [Workshops for Intact Teams](#)
- [Career Management Supports and Workshops](#)
- [Other MOHLTC Learning Opportunities](#)
- [OPS Learning Opportunities](#)
- [On-line Learning](#)
- [Presentations](#)
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- [Communities of Practice and Networking](#)

Learning and development programs will continue to be offered to support staff.

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Do you have questions about the organizational change?

- Ask your manager
- E-mail your questions or comments to the feedback account at anewdirection@ontario.ca
- Call the feedback line at 1-888-862-0528 or TTY: 1-800-387-5559