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THE WATCHDOG

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NEW INVESTIGATION DRAWS HUNDREDS OF COMPLAINTS

ONTARIO'S SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



Hundreds of new complaints have come in since the Ombudsman announced an investigation into the province's services for adults with developmental disabilities who are in crisis. The Ombudsman's Office has received **487** complaints – 424 of those since the investigation was announced on November 29, 2012.

Ombudsman André Marin announced the investigation after several desperate families complained that their loved ones risked being sent to homeless shelters or jail because there was nowhere to care for them.

"You can imagine, if you are a parent, your child turns 18, and you can't care for your child. What do you do then? it's extremely difficult for those parents to cope," Mr. Marin said in a recent radio interview with Charles Adler.

[Watch an interview about the investigation](#)

February 2013

The Ombudsman investigates public complaints about Ontario government agencies. His office oversees more than 500 provincial ministries, agencies, tribunals, boards, commissions and Crown corporations.

[FILE A COMPLAINT ONLINE](#)

Ombudsman Ontario

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GIDDAY, AUSTRALIA

On February 22, Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay spoke via Skype to an investigative skills conference organized by the Ombudsman of Victoria, Australia, in Melbourne. She discussed how the Ontario Ombudsman receives and triages complaints, conducts large-scale systemic investigations and uses

The investigation is being conducted by the Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT) and field work is expected to be completed in late spring. The Ombudsman is asking anyone who has information relevant to the investigation to contact his office at 1-800-263-1830, [file an online complaint](#) or email info@ombudsman.on.ca.

OMBUDSMAN CALLS FOR BRIGHTER SUNSHINE LAW

More consequences, less “oversight shopping”

In the wake of the February 12 decision by Greater Sudbury city council to replace the Ombudsman with a private firm as its investigator for closed meetings, Ombudsman André Marin stated that he plans to ask Premier Kathleen Wynne to address gaps in the Municipal Act rules for open meetings (a.k.a. the “Sunshine Law”).

In media interviews and on Twitter, Mr. Marin said he would like to see four changes:

1. Closed meetings should always be recorded.
2. Municipalities should not be able to “shop” for their investigator (at present, it is the Ombudsman by default, or any other person the municipality chooses).
3. There should be consequences (fines, etc.) for violating the Sunshine Law.
4. Decisions taken in illegal closed meetings should be invalidated.

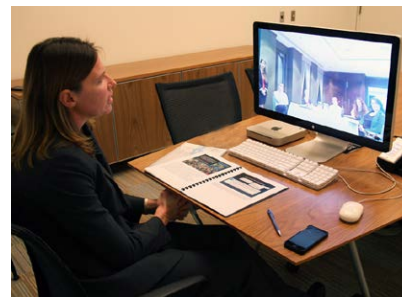
- › [Read the statement by Ontario Ombudsman on the decision of Sudbury Council](#)
- › [Read a compilation of tweets from the Ombudsman's Q&A on Sunshine Law](#)

OPP MOVES FORWARD ON SERVICES FOR OFFICERS WITH OPERATIONAL STRESS INJURIES

In January, the Ombudsman received the first quarterly updates from the Ontario Provincial Police and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, in response to his report In the Line of Duty. The October 2012 report called on the OPP and Ministry to take concrete action to support police officers across the province who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, risk of suicide and other forms of operational stress injuries.

Earlier this month, Ombudsman André Marin tweeted that the OPP's update was “substantive and gives real hope that [the OPP] is moving in the right direction.”

social media.



HELLO, ETOBICOKE

And on February 23, Ashley and Alex attended the annual Government and Community Services Fair at Cloverdale Mall in Etobicoke, handing out brochures and reports. Thanks to all who attended – and signed up to receive *The Watchdog*!

Please continue to reach out to us on social media, or drop us a line at thewatchdog@ombudsman.on.ca.



OFFICE TO OFFICE

Staff from the province's Death Investigations Oversight Council (DIOC) spent a morning with Ombudsman Early Resolution Officers to observe our complaint handling procedures. Senior Ombudsman staff also presented to DIOC on how our office works. Senior Ombudsman staff are also holding a series of meetings with regional correctional managers in the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to outline how we handle the hundred of complaints

The OPP also issued a press release indicating it is working on initiatives based on the Ombudsman's recommendations, including:

- Creating a list of community supports available to officers;
- Providing training about police work to civilian counsellors;
- Hiring retired OPP members as peer supports, as part of a pilot project;
- Expediting response times after critical incidents, and
- Working with the Office of the Chief Coroner to identify suicides amongst current and former officers.

Special Ombudsman Response Team Director Gareth Jones and Investigator Adam Orfanakos also delivered a presentation about In the Line of Duty at the Tema Conter Memorial Trust's "Common Threads" conference on February 22, attended by hundreds of frontline workers. TEMA provides confidential crisis support and referral services to first responders, correctional, military, and communications personnel across Canada.

- [Read more about the report on PsychologyToday.com](#)
- [Read the tweets from TEMA presentation](#)

OTHER INVESTIGATIONS

Use of force in jails: The Ombudsman is in the process of drafting his report and recommendations in this investigation, our largest to date.

Monitoring of drivers with uncontrolled hypoglycemia: The Ombudsman's report and recommendations in this investigation will be drafted soon.

TRAINING

SYT course in Toronto was largest yet



More than 80 participants from five continents – including six Canadian provinces and one territory – attended the Ontario Ombudsman's sixth annual training

we receive from inmates. In January, they met at the Toronto South Detention Centre.

WELCOME BACK

The second session of the 40th Parliament of Ontario began on February 19 with a Throne Speech from the government of new Premier Kathleen Wynne. The Ombudsman welcomed all MPPs and ministers back with a letter advising them on how our office can assist them with complaints from constituents. Referrals from MPPs are an important part of our work.



HOLDING COURT

Ombudsman André Marin and Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay will both be judges in the Niagara Moot Court competition in Toronto, **March 1-2**. Good luck to all participants!

OMLET TIDBITS

The Ombudsman's Open Meeting Law Enforcement Team (OMLET) has been busy. Cases involving public complaints about closed meetings in the following municipalities have been completed in the past two months:

- [Township of Woolwich](#)
- [Niagara District Airport Commission](#)
- [Township of Tiny](#)
- [Municipality of Powassan](#)
- [City of Greater Sudbury](#)
- [Municipality of Lambton Shores](#)

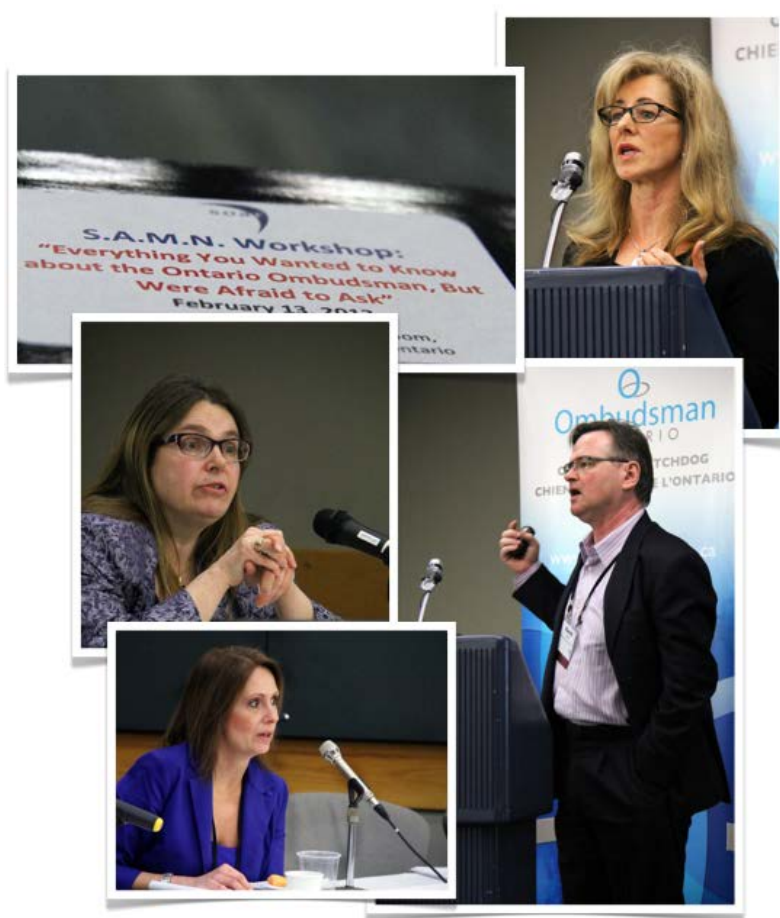
course in Toronto, "Sharpening Your Teeth: Advanced Investigative Training for Administrative Watchdogs," January 21-23.

This year's course, the largest to date, included a new session on the importance of using social media and technology in investigations and communications, as well as training in advanced investigation techniques. Subjects included investigation planning, interviewing witnesses, assessing evidence, writing reports and publicizing them. For the first time, participants could also use an "SYT app" on their mobile phones to get the course schedule, location, etc.

Special guest Peter Wallace, Secretary of the Ontario Cabinet and head of the Ontario public service, gave the keynote speech, emphasizing the importance of government watchdogs. "Your roles were set up for an absolutely vital reason, which is to ensure the public gets its value for money, to ensure the bureaucracy does not run amok, to ensure that there's a human face and human values put on those decisions," he said. "Our world is immensely better off because of the role of the Ombudsman [and other oversight offices]."

"[Sharpening Your Teeth](#)" is conducted on a full cost-recovery basis. The next edition in Toronto is expected to be in January 2014. Customized versions of the course are also available upon request.

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW



- › [Municipality of Leamington](#)
- › [Town of Blind River](#)
- › [Township of Ryerson](#)
- › [Town of Hearst](#)

[More information about investigations of municipal closed meetings](#)

POLICE OVERSIGHT PRIMER

Some 200 Carleton University sociology students welcomed Ombudsman André Marin to their class on February 26, where he took them through his two in-depth investigations of the Special Investigations Unit, the independent agency that probes cases serious injuries or deaths of civilians involving police. The Ombudsman's two reports – [Oversight Undermined](#) (2011) and [Oversight Unseen](#) (2008) – called on the province to enact legislation supporting the SIU. The Ombudsman said he was hopeful the province would act on these recommendations. [Read a compilation of tweets from the Ombudsman's presentation](#).

STAY CONNECTED

The Ombudsman now has more than **11,300** Twitter followers and more than **2,000** Facebook fans. Please continue to reach out to us on social media, or drop us a line at thewatchdog@ombudsman.on.ca

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE?

What would you like to see in our newsletter? Let us know! Email us at thewatchdog@ombudsman.on.ca

Ombudsman senior management, including Senior Counsel Laura Pettigrew, Early Resolutions Manager Eva Kalisz, Investigations Director Sue Haslam, and SORT Director Gareth Jones, presented a session called “Everything You Wanted to Know about the Ontario Ombudsman But Were Afraid to Ask” on February 13 to a workshop for frontline government staff, organized by the Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators.

[Read a compilation of tweets from the presentation](#)

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