CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY AND RIGHTS PROTECTION

This May 2013 marks the 30th anniversary of the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office (PPAO). Since its inception, the PPAO has worked tenaciously to uphold the civil and human rights of people with mental illness throughout Ontario.

The PPAO continues to fulfill its mandate as a rights protection program by providing individual and systemic advocacy in nine of the ten tertiary care psychiatric facilities and rights advice in the vast majority of Schedule 1 mental health hospitals across the province. In 2012, the PPAO addressed nearly 3,000 individual advocacy issues and provided rights advice on more than 34,000 mental health forms.

The PPAO is also an essential and expert educator within the mental health system and to the public at large. Through education, the PPAO actively disseminates information that empowers consumers of mental health services to take a more active role in their own care and treatment, recovery and individual life choices. Moreover, the PPAO promotes the realization and protection of mental health consumers’ rights by raising professional and public awareness about existing safeguards in mental health and allied legislation.

Over the past three decades, the PPAO has demonstrated its importance as an integral component of Ontario’s mental health system by supporting a balance between individual autonomy and professional obligation and authority. In its delivery of rights protection and mental health advocacy services, the PPAO helps to mitigate the stigma and discrimination experienced by mental health consumers and, in so doing, supports their full social inclusion.

Please join me in celebrating the PPAO’s 30 years of accomplishment and the positive contribution the office has made to the lives of the vulnerable Ontarians that it serves and to the mental health system.

Sincerely,

Susan Picarello

Director (A)