**COVID 19 Discussion Teleconference March 13th, 2:00 p.m.**

Present: Gary Dowe, Lisa Holmes, Joe Persaud, Lisa Whittingham, Dean Johnson, Sue VanDeVelde-Coke, Cheryl Farrugia

Recorder: Jennifer Shaw

Discussion

Gary had called the meeting in response to questions and cancellations for the conference in light of the on-going concern about COVID-19. There was general discussion and the following points were raised:

* Multiple agencies (including OADD Board member agencies) had prohibited non-essential travel and would need to cancel registrations
* The colleges and universities are moving to on-line classes
* Multiple conferences and events have already been cancelled
* The public health has recommended cancellation of all events with over 250 participants; the OADD conference anticipated approximately 260 (participants, vendors & staff)
* While participants aren’t health care workers they are working with vulnerable populations and exposure at the conference would put the clients of multiple agencies at risk
* Gary said that GLS has been discussing this as well and would cancel their event if the OADD event was cancelled.
* Lisa W. said that RSIG would cancel as well; options for posting RSIG work on-line were discussed

Also noted where financial issues. Cancelling the conference will impact finances but the association is in a good financial position and did not invest additional funds from cash reserves. The board will monitor finances carefully over the balance of the year. Jennifer suggested planning for multiple one-day events in the fall to help with finances and maintain momentum for the conference in 2021.

Jennifer asked about approaching the hotel to schedule the conference for April 2021 at the Lamplighter; she said that she had discussed cancellation policies with the hotel sales staff and that there may be some cancellation fees however she felt they would be accommodating in the circumstances. It was generally agreed that this would be a good idea. Lisa W. noted that this year’s event had conflicted with a Jewish holiday and offered to find the dates for Easter and Jewish holidays for 2021 so an appropriate week could be selected.

Decisions

It was agreed that:

* The conference would be cancelled
* All registrations and vendor payments would be refunded in full
* We would schedule the 2021 conference at the Lamplighter
* Efforts would be made to plan multiple one day events in the fall

Gary noted that Melody was away and should be informed of the decision; Jennifer will contact Kim Lalonde as Kim is Melody’s friend and former colleague.

Jennifer said that she would contact the hotel and draft an email to all conference participants. Gary and Lisa will review the email prior to it being sent out.

Gary thanked everyone present noting that this was the best decision under the circumstances.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Appendix 1

Email to participants, speakers and conference Vendors

Dear

After careful consideration of the concerns about public gatherings in light of the precautions for COVID 19 the OADD Board has decided that the 31st annual Conference April 6th – 9th, 2020 will be cancelled.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause but feel this course of action protects not only the conference participants and vendors but the populations they serve.

All registrations will be refunded. If you paid by credit card after March 1st we will endeavour to return the payment directly to your credit card. If payment was made by cheque or before March 1st a cheque will be issued to refund you. Please allow two to four weeks for refunds due to the need for office staff to work from home during this time.

If you have booked accommodations for the conference please remember to cancel them as soon as possible.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the OADD office at oadd@oadd.org  Administrative staff will be working from home until April 5th but messages and emails will be returned.