

Infectious Diseases Brochures: Almost Gone, Order Now

Members have been ordering additional copies of the Infectious Diseases Brochure: *What Businesses in Ontario Need to Know* like hotcakes. The brochure, developed by the OCC's Health Policy Committee, was launched earlier this year in response to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak last year.

Thanks to the generous donations of our sponsors, the Insurance Bureau of Canada, Merck Frosst and Hicks Morley, we printed 100,000 brochures which have almost all been distributed. Copies of the brochures were sent in bulk to all OCC affiliate and corporate members as well as MPPs.

The OCC will be distributing its news release next week and we encourage chamber and boards to do the same. A hard copy news release template was sent to you via mail and an electronic copy is available on our website.

As a member of the OCC, you have an important responsibility to ensure that your members are made aware of this valuable information and receive copies of the brochure.

Please post the brochure in your office, include it in your member publications or other related correspondence and communications efforts.

We encourage you to consider developing a local action plan including holding a launch in your region with your local MPP, local Chief Medical Officer, or other official.

Your involvement is key to the success of this initiative.

For more information or to offer your feedback and/or comments please email rachelkagan@occ.on.ca.

OCC Website May be Down Temporarily Next Week

OCC webhosting is being enhanced and though we have been promised a seamless transition, there may be a short period of downtime late next week. Our switch will allow enhanced survey capabilities, courtesy of our friends at Wardrop Engineering. For more information contact Elizabeth Lopez at webmaster@occ.on.ca.

New OCC Staff Contact Information

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Hot on the Heels of the Pre-Budget: OCC Set to Participate in Government Consultations Next Week

On February 17 the Ontario Chamber of Commerce released the results of the 2004 OCC Pre-Budget Survey and distributed its Pre-Budget Submission *Reaching Ontario's Economic Potential*.

The subsequent media coverage on the survey and submission was wide and varied. Publications including the National Post, Ottawa Citizen, Toronto Sun, London Free Press, and the Globe and Mail, quoted the OCC.

However, some of the more exciting exposure came from the Toronto Star. In an editorial from February 19 entitled *Contradictory Advice*, the Star accused the Chamber's submission of being "inconsistent" and "contradictory" as its title declares. As pleased as we were to have the Toronto Star publicize their views on the OCC's Pre-Budget Submission we believe that they misinterpreted our message. The

following Saturday, the OCC's rebuttal was published in the Star entitled *Short Term Debt Okay*. It stated that OCC members believe that a sound approach to addressing the Province's financial difficulty over the next two years is more appropriate than across the board spending cuts. Our members told us that responsibility is the key to addressing the projected deficit; however, they are not losing sight of the importance of fostering a strong and competitive economy through limiting red-tape and ensuring a competitive tax base.

It was interesting to read the Star's editorial on Monday, February 23, entitled *It's a Revenue Problem*. It agreed that short-term deficits are acceptable. "Two or three years of deficit spending will not hurt Ontario. Even the fiscally conservative business community says it can live with deficits until 2006."

In last week's Legislative Watch, we hinted at a new survey to further analyse some of the issues coming out of the pre-budget survey. This week we launched a mini-questionnaire to determine the opinions of our members on specific issues including user fees and the sale of government assets. The results of this survey will be used in the government's pre-budget consultations that are taking place on Thursday, March 4, between the OCC and Minister of Finance, Greg Sorbara. The survey will end on **Monday, March 1 at noon**. If you have not already done so please take a few moments to complete the survey which can be found on our website at www.occ.on.ca, and please send the link to your own members to ensure a healthy response from across the province. For more information, or to download a complete copy of the submission or survey results, please visit our website.