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Highlights this Year



Mail Sexual Health

OPT launched a range of postage stamps this year. The postage value is equivalent to a 52 cent stamp, and are available for purchase through the Provincial Office.



OPTIONS FOR SEXUAL HEALTH

A society that celebrates healthy sexuality, its diversity of expression, and a positive self-image for individuals throughout life.

President's Message

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Our Icons



Our Vision

A society that celebrates healthy sexuality, its diversity of expression, and a positive sexual self image for individuals throughout life.

President's message

Going where we have never been before—that statement sums up OPT's activities for the past year. We have a new partnership with the Northern Health Authority resulting in access to sexual health services for many more northern residents. OPT collaborated with Sexual Health Access Alberta to bring the "WontGetWeird" network to BC. Children & Women's Hospital is the new home of the Vancouver clinic, resulting in greater visibility and awareness of OPT services. The first Certification Program for Sexual Health Educators was conducted this year, increasing our cadre of educators prepared to deliver programs in BC. A Men's Health clinic is in the pilot stage at OPT's Vancouver office clinic. We now have on-line Volunteer training. And we even have our own postage stamps. What a dynamic organization we have!



All of these achievements are possible because of the talent and skills that volunteers and staff bring to OPT. All of this is possible because other organizations are willing and eager to collaborate with us. All of this is made possible through financial contributions from your donations, BC government funding, plus revenue from clinic sales and education programs. OPT is able to continue growing because of its strong base of programs and support. I am grateful to everyone who has contributed to this success and am looking forward with much anticipation to more growth and new ventures for OPT in the coming year. I hope everyone will join with me to make this a reality.

Margaret McKelvie
President

Executive Director's Report

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OPT Icons



Our Mission

To promote optimal sexual health for all British Columbians by supporting reproductive choice, reducing unplanned pregnancy, and providing quality education, information, and clinical services.

Executive Director's Report

In a twelve month time frame it is not always easy to see what significance should be attached to the developments and changes that have taken place in an organization. Preparing an annual report provides an opportunity to take stock, but the focus tends to be on what got done rather than speculation about its impact. I would like to take a moment to break from that perspective, with four observations:



- We received another Helen and Fred Bentley Award for Excellence in Achievement in 2006. The award is given through the Canadian Federation for Sexual Health. We got the award for our program of advocacy for improved sexual health education. It meant a lot, particularly because at times it didn't seem we had much impact within the province – an example, perhaps, of considering things in too close a time frame. By the end of the year, OPT had been invited to share our advocacy toolkits and policy position statements with a national team looking at ways to reduce adolescent pregnancy, including education. It now appears that our work will be part of a nationally available resource kit.
- The agreement we reached with the Northern Health Authority holds a lot of promise for how we might interact with other regional Health Authorities, and for how more residents in rural and remote areas of the province can receive quality sexual health services. From the outset, the partnership has demonstrated financial and other benefits for both parties that we hope will be attractive to other Health Authorities managing scarce resources. This is a case where it would be nice if time could go more quickly!
- Our first foray into the certification of sexual health educators opened a doorway for enhancing the availability of excellent educators in the field, but we realized how much we had to learn about running a top-quality certification program! In our zeal to think far ahead, we were reminded by the excellent work - week to week - of our established educators, and of the importance of maintaining their proficiency and supports in this challenging field, regardless of whether or not a certification program is in place. The evaluations they received during the year certainly confirmed the quality of what they did. The Ministry of Education does not have standards for the proficiency of individuals teaching sexual health curriculum, so the reputation our educators built for themselves and OPT with each classroom, parent and teacher group played a large part in their success.
- For the first time in over a decade, the number of visits to OPT clinics declined from the previous year. Even adjusting for the transfer of clinics to Northern Health we saw fewer clinic visits than we expected. There are two reasons we believe this happened. The first is the availability of longer-term contraceptives like the patch, necessitating fewer renewal visits. The second is that the low price of OPT contraceptives permits clients to purchase more at a time, also affecting the number of return visits. In any event, the

experience of 2006-07 points to the importance of promoting awareness of OPT services in communities, so we continue to attract new clients.

OPT ended the fiscal year (April 1 to March 31) with an operating deficit of \$32,768. Put into perspective, we needed to generate \$7900 of income every calendar day to meet our needs and obligations, and we fell about nine days short. We got to October 11 on the strength of our earned revenue – the sales of contraceptives, our fees for education, and the commissions our dedicated physicians consigned to us. The contracts we have with the Ministry of Health and the Provincial Health Services Authority for the delivery of services got us to February 3. The remainder – the grants, donations and other fundraising we did – took us to March 26. For the last five days we spent some of OPT's accumulated reserves.

Why did we overspend? We spent more on the training and development of our staff than we anticipated, on the costs associated with the educator certification program, and on the enhancement we so badly need for our web site. In all, however, we spent less than we budgeted in an effort to keep pace with the shortfall in MSP commissions and revenues for our education services, but we failed to match those decreases completely.

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OPT owes a great debt to the staff in every location who unfailingly and enthusiastically delivered excellence and creativity to our clients and our programs, to the volunteers who supported the clients and staff in our clinics and presented our organization in community settings, and to the volunteers who gave their skills, energies and dedication to the work of our Provincial Board of Directors, and our Branch Boards. Thank you all.



Greg Smith
Executive Director

Sexual Health Education

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Other News

- The Vancouver School Board received the OPT Education Award for 2006, for its comprehensive review and re-development of sexual health curriculum, for its leadership in the advocacy of quality sexual health education, and for its support of other school districts in the province seeking improved curriculum.
- Joy Becker stepped down as the Director of the Education Program, but remained active as a specialized educator and the chief instructor and coordinator of the certification program.



Sexual Health Education: CLONING JOY BECKER

If you have ever had the experience of watching OPT's Joy Becker deliver a sexual health education class, you know how much we wish it were possible to clone her. Options for Sexual Health takes pride in having – in Joy and her colleagues – the most capable sexual health educators available anywhere. The challenge facing us has been making them available everywhere. The demand for quality sexual health education, in schools, in parent groups, and elsewhere, greatly exceeds the supply of skilled educators.

Since cloning was not an option, we did the next best thing. In the summer of 2006 we took the first steps toward training and certifying a new group of sexual health educators who, through their own initiatives as well as collaboration with OPT, could begin to meet the growing demand across the province. Joy led the design and delivery of the first month-long course; following the course work, students were expected to complete sixty hours of supervised and observed teaching in a variety of milieux. By the end of 2006-07 they were well on the way to meeting all of their initial training requirements. Over time, they will be expected to maintain their proficiency through selected continuing education activities. The plan is to have all the current candidates for certification reviewed by an advisory committee representing the health and education fields, with a view to issuing certificates in the fall of 2007.

The sexual health educator certification program is very much a work in progress, and the first individuals through the program shared its growing pains with patience and excellent ideas for improvement. In the course of implementing the initial program, we identified a number of changes in approach that would improve its accessibility and effectiveness, and provide students with better outcomes. These are being incorporated into the next iteration of the program.

Joy and her colleagues achieved something else remarkable in 2006-07. For the first time, the fees collected for sexual health education services exceeded the cost of delivering the program in the field. Given that the provincial government provides no core funding for the delivery of this important and provincially mandated health curriculum, it is essential that we operate on a cost-recovery basis.

Clinical Services



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Other News

- New clinics opened in Prince George, Creston, Fernie, and Kimberley. The Kootenay Loop clinic in Vancouver expanded its service to two evenings weekly to meet demand. Nanaimo emerged as our busiest clinic, with over 5,000 client visits during the year.
- OPT's Director of Clinical Services, Shanti Gidwani, left for Spain on a year's leave of absence. Danielle Chard assumed the role in her absence.
- Carmen Sigalet (Vernon), Barbara Kelly (Courtenay) and Heather Tingle (Lower Mainland) received the 2006 Executive Director's Award of Excellence for their superb work on the most comprehensive review of OPT's clinical standards undertaken since their inception. They also re-organized the orientation guide for new nurses to make it simpler and more



Clinical Services: PARTNERSHIP WITH NORTHERN HEALTH BRINGS SERVICES TO MORE COMMUNITIES

A landmark agreement between Options for Sexual Health and the Northern Health Authority has enhanced sexual health services in several northern BC communities, and has changed the role of OPT in the delivery of those services. Under the agreement signed in the fall of 2006, the NHA assumed responsibility for the operation of OPT's clinics in Smithers, Terrace, Prince Rupert, Huston and Kitimat (already a joint venture), and the parties set a timetable for the introduction of services in other communities across the north in 2007 and beyond. OPT's role under the agreement is threefold:

- to supply the clinics with contraceptive products and related information materials
- to provide initial training and continuing education for NHA nurses working in the clinics to the same standard as OPT's nurses receive
- to set the clinical protocols and procedures that reflect the best of current practice (and that apply in all OPT clinics) and to carry out quality management reviews in all locations on behalf of the NHA, to ensure that those criteria are being met

Financially, the agreement is self-contained. The NHA purchases contraceptive products from OPT at the regular price charged in all OPT clinics; the revenues generated cover the cost of the professional training and quality management

relevant to current operations.

services that OPT provides.

The significance of the agreement is that it meets objectives of both organizations with respect to the reach and quality of sexual health services in remote communities in the north, and it improves the linkage between sexual health services and other community health activities.

2006 AGM

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OPT Award Winners



THE 2006 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OPT's Annual General Meeting takes place over two days. The first evening is devoted to celebrating and recognizing exceptional contributors to sexual health in the province and the success of our organization. The annual business meeting takes place the following morning, accompanied by working sessions between the Branches and the Provincial Board. The 2006 AGM was held on September 29 and 30 in Richmond.

Dr. Jan Christilaw received the Dorothy Shaw Award for volunteer leadership. Although she is in high demand internationally for her knowledge, skill and experience, Jan has been generous with her time as a member of the OPT Board of Directors, the Chair of the Reproductive Health Advisory Network, and an expert presenter in the Board's education sessions. At the AGM, Jan spoke passionately about the rights and conditions of women around the world, including those in Canada's First Nations population.

Dr. Jim Jamieson received the Jeffrey Dolph Memorial Award, given to a physician working with OPT who demonstrates outstanding dedication and compassion to our clients.

Nominations for the Volunteer of the Year Award come from fellow volunteers and OPT staff, so every person proposed for the award can take a lot of pride in the recognition that comes with the nomination. Pat Punt (Revelstoke) and Maggie Crowe (Kaslo) were selected by the Board of Directors for their hard work and leadership in helping to establish and develop OPT services in their communities.

At the business meeting members elected new Directors and completed the other standard business of the occasion. Members also approved important changes to the status of individuals who support Options for Sexual Health through donations and membership. Now all donors of any amount automatically become members and enjoy the benefits of membership unless they indicate they do not wish to join.

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Our Funders



Lower Mainland,
Fraser Valley,
Campbell River &
District, Castlegar & District, Comox
Valley, Cranbrook, Nanaimo and
District, North Okanagan Columbia
Shuswap, and Nelson & District
United Way



Columbia Basin Trust



Columbia Basin Trust



PROGRAM AND PROJECT FUNDING

Ministry of Health funding for the Sex Sense Line continued through 2006-07, at the same level as the previous year; the funding was sufficient to cover the whole cost of operating and promoting the Line.

OPT also continued to receive program funding from the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), also unchanged. PHSA support accounted for 19% of OPT's total budget. The Fraser Health Authority contributed \$4000 to the cost of the Iron Horse Youth Clinic.

OPT was again generously funded from the Direct Charitable Access program of the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch of the Ministry for Public Safety. Most of OPT's gaming funding was used to subsidize the delivery of OPT's education programs for school students, parents, youth and adults in care and custody, and others.

OPT acknowledges as well the core and program support we received from the United Way of the Lower Mainland, the United Way of the Fraser Valley, the Campbell River and District United Way, the Nanaimo and District United Way, the Castlegar District United Way, the Comox Valley United Way, the United Way of Cranbrook, the United Way of the North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap, and the Nelson and District United Way.

Our Clients

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Partners



WORKING WITH OTHERS

Thanks to Sexual Health Access Alberta (SHAA), OPT was able to purchase the rights to use SHAA's imaginative "Won'tGetWeird" program for identifying and promoting health care professionals, educators and other service providers who formally commit themselves to delivering non-judgmental, comprehensive and well-informed sexual health services according to WGW guidelines. With some modifications to suit our BC audience, OPT launched the BC WontGetWeird campaign in September 2006 with bus advertisements, catchy pocket cards, and posters. OPT and SHAA linked activities through a joint WGW web site that maintains a consistent look to the initiative across two provinces. Both organizations hope this is the start of a national network.

OPT promoted WontGetWeird widely among health professionals and others with an invitation to become part of an inventory of service providers to whom referrals could be made with confidence. The idea attracted an initial group of over a hundred professionals, and the number continues to grow. For some, it was a useful opportunity to review personal comfort zones and the knowledge base from which they were providing services.

The WontGetWeird campaign also provided an opportunity to re-brand the Facts of Life Line, OPT's toll-free information and referral line. The line is funded by the BC Ministry of Health. Although it was well recognized under its existing name, some people assumed from the name that the line was anti-choice in its orientation. To our delight, we found that the line's toll-free number translated into the keypad letters spelling "SEX-SENSE". That became the new name for the line, and it was jointly promoted with WontGetWeird. At the same time, email access to the SEX-SENSE line was introduced and increased significantly, an indication of the success of the campaign.

OPT continued to partner with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority in the delivery of a youth clinic in North Vancouver. This arrangement has proved to be

beneficial to both parties, and the number of clients using the clinic continued to grow. The Iron Horse Youth Clinic in Maple Ridge continued to thrive, thanks in part to a decision by the Fraser Health Authority to contribute roughly a third of the core costs of operating this multi-provider health service.

Strength in Numbers

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What our clients say

"They don't rush my consultations. "

"On the phone they were very helpful and nice. It feels comfortable here and not hospitalish "

"It was very helpful to have knowledgeable people serving the phone lines and the front desk. When I left a message on the phone line, I was called back right away. Thanks for a great service The staff and volunteers were very professional and took the time to clearly explain everything and answer all my questions without making me feel embarrassed or uncomfortable "

"You guys are great and everyone is really nice and makes you feel comfortable. Thanks! "

"Level of empathy and compassion among all the staff is excellent. Wonderful communication regarding options and knowledge -Overall good friendly service"

"You guys are awesome!! Thanks SO much!"



OUR CLIENTS

OPT periodically asks clinic clients about their level of satisfaction with our services, how they learned about our clinics, and why they come to OPT. Overall, OPT's clients were very satisfied with their experience, and many expressed their appreciation for the quality and openness they encountered. We see a consistent profile of our clients from year to year, and 2006-07 was typical. Most clients chose OPT because they could have the time they needed to get the explanations they wanted, and they found in our clinics a friendly, non-judgmental environment. Many clients came because our prices are affordable. Most clients were seeking information on contraception and contraceptive products.

A number of clients wanted to see longer hours of clinic operation, including daytime hours, and we were able to respond to that request in some of our locations. Some clients wanted contraceptive prices would be lower; that was more difficult to consider because OPT purchase prices rose in some cases and those increases were absorbed.

Information from a friend was a very common way to learn about OPT; school and doctor's offices were the second most common way, and the Sex Sense Line and local posters were third. The bus ads promoting the WontGetWeird campaign were very popular, and many clients noted the phone number on the ads as a place to start.

One measure of the success of our bus ad campaigns is the number of ads removed from the bus by "collectors". Our Sex Sense Line staff are accustomed to hearing from callers who have access to the number because they have one of our bus ads on their wall!

OPT also requests written evaluation feedback after education sessions. Looking through the evaluations received in 2006-07, there were several consistent features to the feedback our educators received, whether the audience was students,

parents, educators or health professionals:

- Participants were hungry for the information OPT provided. There is a serious lack of alternate sources of the sexual health information provided, and a strong desire for comprehensive information and discussion of the topic. From health professionals we heard comments like “People just assume we know it all.” The sentiments we often heard from educators were reflected in this comment: “I was really nervous about teaching the sex ed unit. I feel way better now”. Students somewhat ill-at-ease with the subject appreciated the opportunity just to listen without feeling pressure to participate in discussions.
- Participants overwhelmingly commented on the skill level of OPT’s educators, and the open, friendly, non-judgmental environment they created. “Awesome” was a rather common term used to describe them in the evaluations we received. There is evidently a very effective style and approach used by OPT’s educators.
- Many participants expressed how much they benefited from the “values clarification” exercise that is usually part of an OPT education session, but many also acknowledged how personally challenging it could be to confront and share with others the boundaries of their own comfort zones. This part of an OPT education session can also be challenging for the educator, who must be alert to individuals whose personal experiences may evoke a strong emotional response.

Be sure to visit our website at www.optionsforsexualhealth.org

Working with Others

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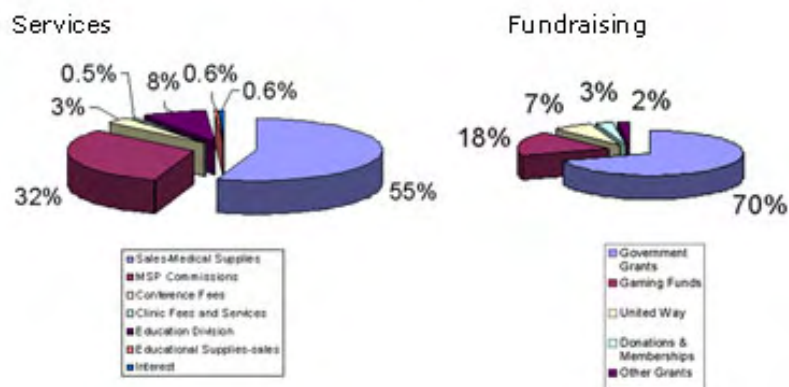
When we began...

The first family planning clinic was opened in Vancouver in 1965 by Medical Advisory and dedicated nurses. The clinic was financed through donations and a small charge for services. Held in the basement of a house near 10th and Laurel, the clinic was attended by 176 patients by the end of that year.

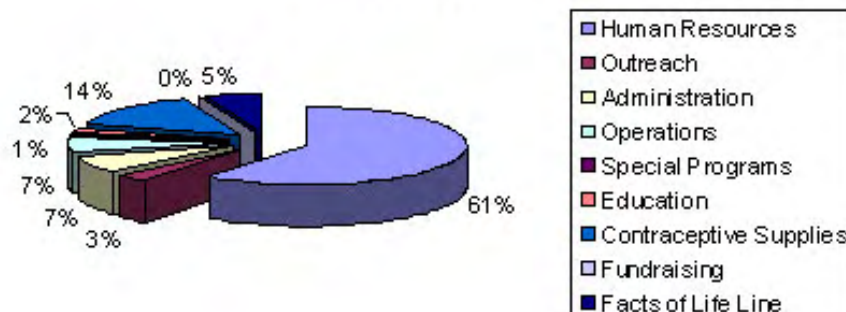
FINANCIAL PICTURE

Extracted from Audited Financial Statements

Revenue



Expenses



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