



LAW COMMISSION OF ONTARIO
COMMISSION DU DROIT DE L'ONTARIO

**Law Commission of Ontario Reports on First Stage of Project
On the Law and Older Persons**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TORONTO, January 23, 2009 - The Law Commission of Ontario (LCO) today released the results of its public consultation into the law as it affects older persons. This completes the first stage of a multi-stage project that is expected to result in the development of a new approach to this area of the law.

The LCO began the project last spring by seeking public input on what issues should be examined in this area and on the principles to shape its research. The LCO received written submissions from 21 organizations and experts, and conducted interviews with six others.

"Public consultation is essential to the LCO's work," said Executive Director Dr. Patricia Hughes. "The input that we have received has had a significant impact on the way in which this project will proceed."

Hughes noted that with the aging of Canada's population comes both opportunities and challenges. "It will be increasingly important to have a clear understanding of the needs, circumstances and experiences of older persons, and to have appropriate and effective policy frameworks in place," she said.

Based on the results of this consultation and the LCO's independent research, the LCO has adopted five preliminary principles that may guide this area of law: independence (autonomy), participation, security, dignity and respect for the diversity of older adults. The LCO will consider these principles through research and analysis on the following five questions:

1. What would an anti-ageist approach to the law look like?
2. When is it appropriate or effective to use age as a legal category?
3. What principles and approaches best promote access to the law for older adults?
4. How can the law appropriately recognize and support the relationships of older adults?
5. How can a principled framework for the law as it affects older adults be applied to the unique circumstances of institutional living?

The LCO will be conducting intensive research on these topics over the next several months, and is now completing the process of selecting experts to carry out research on selected topics. An interim report will be prepared as the basis for further public consultation in the fall of this year, with a final report expected in the second half of 2010. Launched in September 2007, the LCO, which is housed at Osgoode Hall Law School of York University, operates independently of government to recommend law reforms to enhance access to justice.

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