

October 25, 2013

**OTTAWA POLICE
SERVICES BOARD**

Mr. Eli El-Chantiry
Chair
Ottawa Police Services Board
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Mr. El-Chantiry:

Subject: Mediation for Public Complaints Program

I am writing to introduce a new initiative at the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD). The OIPRD Mediation for Public Complaints program will be launched in November 2013. The mediation program will predominately be available for informal resolution under Part V of the *Police Services Act*. It is a voluntary, alternative dispute resolution process designed to encourage communication and problem solving between a complainant and a police officer.

Mediation has been requested by numerous police services and Justice LeSage, in his review of the public complaints system, recognized that the involvement of mediation would improve the public complaints process. Under the *Police Services Act*, informal resolution can be attempted any time after a conduct complaint is referred for investigation and prior to going to a hearing, where the complainant and the respondent officer agree. Informal resolution can also be recommended at the conclusion of an investigation that is substantiated less serious. As a result, the OIPRD is offering mediation services throughout these stages of the complaint process.

We have contracted mediation services to provide mediation throughout the province. We encourage mediators to use the community mediation model of mediation. This is a facilitative and transformative model where the complainant and the respondent officer meet together with the assistance of a neutral mediator to resolve the complaint. It gives both parties the opportunity to work together to develop a mutually agreeable resolution.

The potential benefits of mediation for police services include officers gaining a better understanding of their interactions with civilians and having an opportunity to explain their actions and learn from their behaviour. Complainants can benefit from a better understanding of policing and having the opportunity to express their views. The potential benefits for the public complaints system include greater efficiency and cost savings through avoiding lengthy investigations.

You can find more information about the mediation program on our website at: www.oiprd.on.ca. I believe that this new initiative can greatly benefit all parties involved, lead to a more effective and