

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
December 2, 2010

### **BRITISH COLUMBIANS RECOMMEND SOLUTIONS TO COMMUNITY LIVING CRISIS**

VANCOUVER -- A network of self-advocates, families, support workers, service providers, and community groups are marking the International Day of Persons with Disabilities – December 3 – by releasing a number of preliminary recommendations for addressing the current crisis in the community living sector.

"These recommendations emerged through open dialogue between self-advocates, families, support workers and other key stakeholders in two major BC communities," said Jane Dyson, executive director of the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities. "Political leaders and decision-makers should be paying attention, and must act quickly to protect and improve supports for adults with developmental disabilities."

Dyson was one of several panelists who made presentations at recent community meetings in Vancouver and Victoria that brought together approximately 330 people to discuss issues and concerns relating to provincial government supports for adults with developmental disabilities. Other panelists included representatives from Moms on the Move, BC Government and Service Employees' Union, and BC Association for Community Living.

Despite projected increases in demand for supports provided by Community Living BC (CLBC), the Crown agency's provincial government funding is frozen until at least 2013. As a result, CLBC is seeking millions of dollars in cost savings by requiring its contracted agencies to reduce and redesign services, with a focus on reducing staffed residential resources ("group homes") and expanding other lower-cost options, including home sharing placements. Choice in support options is being eroded, and many individuals and families are not being consulted.

In response to these developments, community members attended the Vancouver and Victoria meetings to voice their concerns and develop recommendations for ensuring that adults with developmental disabilities have the options, services and supports they need in British Columbia.

A number of recommendations emerged during the meetings, including calls for increased funding for the community living sector, an independent advocate for adults with developmental disabilities, and stronger legislation governing community living supports. In addition, meeting participants called for an end to cost-driven group home closures and service reductions, better safeguards and monitoring for home sharing, and more consultation, transparency and accountability in the sector.

A list of many of the preliminary recommendations follows. A full report on the Vancouver and Victoria meetings will be released in early 2011.

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## BACKGROUNDER

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### RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS TO COMMUNITY LIVING CRISIS

At recent meetings in Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbians have put forward various recommendations for addressing the current crisis in the community living sector, including the following:

- ♦ **INCREASE FUNDING:** Increase provincial government funding to meet the support needs of adults with developmental disabilities, and allocate the funding equitably and strategically.
- ♦ **CREATE AN INDEPENDENT ADVOCATE:** Establish an Independent Officer of the Legislature with a broad legislated mandate to improve supports and outcomes for adults with developmental disabilities through oversight, advocacy, accountability, and review.
- ♦ **LISTEN TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES:** Re-centre the community living support system around adults with developmental disabilities and their families by promoting choice in service options and inclusion in planning processes.
- ♦ **CONSULT AND COLLABORATE:** Expand the range of participants in decision-making and planning processes to meaningfully include service agencies, front-line workers, disability advocates, and other stakeholders with key knowledge and expertise.
- ♦ **INTRODUCE LEGISLATION:** Establish a new statutory framework setting out the inclusion rights and support entitlements of adults with developmental disabilities.
- ♦ **IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:** Ensure that decision-making and planning processes in the community living sector are open and transparent, and implement measures to ensure the government's system of community living supports is held to account.
- ♦ **REGULATE HOME SHARING:** Develop and implement a statutory framework for home sharing, covering matters such as service standards, training, and oversight.
- ♦ **PROTECT GROUP HOMES:** Stop cost-driven group home closures and service reductions.

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