

From: Minister, MSD MSD:EX [mailto:SD.Minister@gov.bc.ca]
Sent: Monday, May 09, 2011 1:16 PM
To: 'jwd@bccpd.bc.ca'
Cc: Premier's Office PREM:EX
Subject: RE: BC Community Living Action Group: Reaching Out/Weighing In

Ref: 170968

Jane Dyson
Executive Director
BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
jwd@bccpd.bc.ca

Dear Ms. Dyson:

Thank you for your email and attached report dated April 26, 2011, addressed to the Honourable Christy Clark, Premier, regarding your report "Reaching Out, Weighing in: Report on the Skills & (Dis)Abilities meetings to address the Community Living Crisis in BC". As Minister of Social Development, I am pleased to respond.

I have reviewed the report "Reaching Out, Weighing In" and can assure you that the Ministry of Social Development and Community Living BC (CLBC) share your commitment to meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in British Columbia. The provincial government supports CLBC in pursuing greater opportunities for community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities.

I appreciate the time you have taken to develop recommendations and am pleased to let you know that CLBC is already in alignment with many of the recommendations, as identified below.

Increase Funding

CLBC's 2011/12 budget is \$701 million. Their first priority remains the individuals and families they support. The CLBC budget has increased greatly since 2005/6. CLBC remains committed to considering innovative approaches to support as many individuals as possible, while ensuring that services meet individuals' disability-related needs. As the demand for CLBC supports and services continues to increase, we must effectively manage our resources to make our system of supports sustainable while delivering services in a fair and equitable manner. While CLBC does have individuals and families requesting services, these requests are continually assessed and needs prioritized. CLBC works closely with service providers to support the greatest level of independence and community integration for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Create an Independent Advocate

There is an Advocate for Service Quality that reports directly to the Minister of Social Development. The Advocate is an Order-in-Council, which is an appointed position that is not affiliated with CLBC. The Advocate's role is to help adults with developmental disabilities, and transitioning youth with special needs and their families, have access to supports and services that are available. The Advocate can help with services from several different ministries, including the Ministry of Social Development, Health, CLBC and other service agencies in various communities. No other province in Canada has similar legislation for adults with developmental disabilities.

Raise Public Awareness

CLBC and the BC Association for Community Living have established a Service Redesign Quality Assurance Committee (co-chaired by CLBC and the BC Association for Community Living) in order to collaboratively support and inform the service redesign process across the province. Established in September 2010, the Committee is working to ensure service redesign is implemented based on the principles of person-centered planning and community inclusion.

Listen to Individuals and Families

CLBC policies, supports and services are guided by a strong commitment to community living for people with developmental disabilities. The most important partners for CLBC are the people we support. We respect that individuals, their families and community members can be trusted to know themselves, their strengths and what they need.

During the 2010/2011 fiscal year, CLBC met with more than 5,000 individuals, families and community members through different workshops, presentations and training sessions to engage in dialogue around key initiatives and themes, such as aging, informal safeguards, youth in transition and employment.

CLBC has a Self-Advocate Advisor, Family Partnership Advisor and Aboriginal Advisor who regularly meet with individuals and families around the province to listen and learn about how CLBC's family-friendly practices can be strengthened and improved. These advisors facilitate networking initiatives, partnership building and regular communication. In 2010/2011 these advisors hosted 15 sessions, entitled 'A Place to Meet: Sharing the Power of Stories.' The sessions invited individuals with developmental disabilities and families to share their stories of inspiration, innovation and experience.

In addition, CLBC's Community Councils work collaboratively with community partners to support community inclusion, citizenship and full participation of people with developmental disabilities. For example, the Surrey/Delta Community Council are facilitating a series of 'Families Connecting with Families' sessions to provide an opportunity for families to connect with other families to share information and resources. The Advisory Committee provides information and advice to the CLBC Board to assist with governance and decision making.

Consult and Collaborate

Over the last year, CLBC has organized a number of events around the province to engage different stakeholders in dialogue. Examples of these events include the aging forums, family story sessions, community council meetings, provincial advisory committee, self advocate conferences, personal support network sessions and focus groups with self advocates.

All CLBC policies include consultation with individuals, families, our staff, community service-providers and government ministries that are affected by the policy. This ensures accountability and collaboration with the people we support, our community and government partners.

Introduce Provincial Legislation

CLBC is mandated under the *Community Living Authority Act*, to deliver supports and services to adults with developmental disabilities and their families in British Columbia. CLBC is working to create communities where people with developmental disabilities have more choices about how they live, work and contribute.

Improve Transparency and Accountability

We are committed to operating transparently and have made publications available that articulate our operating and financial performance. CLBC's 2011/2012 – 2013/2014, Service Plan contains information related to caseload growth, resource management, resource allocation and financial outlook. CLBC's Annual Reports are made public in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, and are available on CLBC's website: www.communitylivingbc.ca.

CLBC's Service Plan also includes the Shareholders Letter of Expectation, which clearly identifies the organization's accountabilities. The above noted Service Redesign Quality Assurance Committee is another example of transparency and accountability.

Develop and Implement a Plan

CLBC has an ongoing responsibility to ensure financial accountability and support the greatest number of individuals with developmental disabilities possible. Individuals, families, service providers, community

partners, and CLBC must work together to ensure that we are continuously collecting and using information to improve services. We are committed to working with our network of over 3,200 contracted service providers to transform the way services are delivered to allow for the greatest community inclusion and independence for the people we support. Services must be provided according to an individuals' disability-related need.

CLBC's Service Plan outlines CLBC's caseload growth, resource management, resource allocation and financial outlook.

Regulate Home Sharing

CLBC offers a range of residential services including supported living, shared living (home sharing or live-in supports) and staffed residential living (group homes).

Approximately 3,100 people live in home sharing or semi-independent living arrangements. Over 50 per cent of home sharing providers have more than 15 years experience. Many of these providers have been supporting the same individual for over 15 years.

CLBC has specific policies and standards to ensure individuals receive consistent and high-quality support in all residential arrangements. CLBC's standards for home sharing clarify the roles and responsibilities of home sharing providers and allow those who are responsible for monitoring home sharing arrangements to assess whether contractors are meeting established standards. The majority of home sharing arrangements are provided by community agencies accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities or the Council on Accreditation.

Protect Group Homes

I would like to emphasize that there are no forced moves out of group homes. CLBC is working with people who want a greater say in their living situation. Some group homes may close due to people aging and individuals requesting different housing options in their communities. During the 2010/11 fiscal year, 111 individuals, out of approximately 2,400 living in group homes transitioned to new residential settings including 60 to other group homes. During the past year, there was a six per cent increase in the number of adults with developmental disabilities supported by CLBC.

It is important to understand that CLBC is addressing caseload growth through a range of measures, including reviewing existing service commitments to more closely align funding to meet the need of each person's disability-related needs. CLBC facilitators are available to help individuals and families access generic supports and services in the community.

Over 93 per cent of CLBC's budget is spent directly on providing services and programs to assist people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Thank you again for sharing the report. I value your recommendations and share your commitment to supporting persons with disabilities in British Columbia.

Yours truly,

Harry Bloy
Minister of Social Development

pc: Honourable Christy Clark, Premier