



# BC Community Living Action Group (BC-CLAG)

A provincial network of service, support, and advocacy organizations, family groups, & other community living stakeholders

## PRESS RELEASE:

### **CLBC waitlist figures unreliable says stakeholder group - BC-CLAG urges external review of CLBC's mandate and operations**

*For immediate release: October 6, 2011*

Statistics showing how many people with developmental disabilities are waiting for services across British Columbia are unreliable and misleading, says the BC Community Living Action Group (BC-CLAG), which is calling on the government to conduct an external review of CLBC's mandate and operations.

"We have very little confidence in the waitlist numbers. They misrepresent the scope, scale and severity of the community living crisis affecting vulnerable adults and their families," says BC-CLAG partner Faith Bodnar.

"Restoring faith in the community living support system should begin with an acknowledgement of the scope of the problem," adds Bodnar.

CLBC figures are unreliable because:

- The 2,089 adults with disabilities with outstanding CLBC service requests may actually only receive a minimal amount of services. For instance, this number would include individuals whose families receive just one or two hours of day programming per month, but actually urgently need supported living arrangements and other supports;
- Once an adult with disability receives one kind of service, such as housing support, they may be waitlisted for all the other types of services that they need, such as behavioural or employment support
- BC-CLAG knows of families being told that are being told they may not request expensive supports from CLBC, such as supported living (group homes), even though these are required. Moreover, requests for supported living require a higher level of approval within CLBC than do all other services;
- An estimated 38,000 adult British Columbians with a developmental disability are eligible for services under Community Living BC's mandate, yet only 13,696 individuals – one-third of the total – are registered with CLBC. In fact, families continue to provide 90% of the supports for adults with developmental disabilities in B.C., and many do so 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year;
- The figures are not date-specific, and do not show year-on-year trends of increased waitlists. Every year, hundreds of youths with developmental disabilities reach the age of 19 and turn to CLBC as they age out of supports funded by the Ministry for Children and Families. These families may wait years to access proper services. There is no accounting for these young adults coming into CLBC's system;
- Community Living B.C. has been resisting releasing waitlist numbers for months. In June, we were told that waitlist numbers did not exist. In September, we were told CLBC was "looking for an appropriate way to present the figures." The waitlist numbers have finally been released because of a freedom of information request filed by the B.C Government and Services Employees' Union, a BC-CLAG partner organization.

"We will raise our concerns directly with Social Development Minister Cadieux next week, and we look forward to discussing how to best address the crisis in community living with her," says BC-CLAG partner Jane Dyson. "Our group represents a wide variety of stakeholders in the community living system, including agencies, self-advocates, families, and support staff, and our recommendations are unanimous. We certainly hope to be heard," added Dyson.



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In addition to an external review of CLBC's mandate and services, BC-CLAG is calling on the provincial government to:

1. **Immediately stop cuts to services and supports, including group home closures;**
2. **Immediately approve \$70 million in new provincial funding to stem the province's growing community living crisis;**
3. **Create an independent advocate for adults with developmental disabilities similar to the Representative for Children and Youth,** with a broad legislated mandate to improve supports and outcomes by providing oversight, monitoring and public reporting;
4. **Introduce provincial legislation** setting out the inclusion rights and support entitlements of adults with developmental disabilities.

**About BC-CLAG:** The BC Community Living Action Group (BC-CLAG) is a network of self-advocates, families, support staff and agencies who support adults with disabilities. More info: <http://communitylivingaction.org/>

Or contact the following BC CLAG representatives:

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- Jane Dyson, BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, cell 778 895 6150

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