



BC Community Living Action Group (BC-CLAG)

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

BACKGROUNDER

For Immediate Release

November 18, 2011

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO STEM BC'S COMMUNITY LIVING CRISIS

In the escalating crisis in BC's community living sector, the BC-Community Living Action Group reiterates its urgent call to action to the provincial government. Political leaders and decision-makers must act quickly to safeguard the health, safety, and human rights of adults with developmental disabilities. We call on the government to implement the following consensus recommendations that are based on consultation and collaboration with key community living stakeholder groups.

1. **IMMEDIATELY STOP CLBC'S BUDGET-DRIVEN CUTS TO SERVICES AND SUPPORTS, PENDING A FULL EXTERNAL REVIEW**
 - Discontinue CLBC's "service redesign" policy and plan.
 - Impose a moratorium on cuts to residential services and day programs.
2. **COMMISSION A COMPREHENSIVE EXTERNAL REVIEW OF CLBC'S MANDATE AND OPERATIONS**
 - Order a *commission of public inquiry* into CLBC, community living and the quality of life of people with developmental disabilities in BC under the *Public Inquiry Act* [SBC 2007] Chapter 9; expenses to be paid from the province's Consolidated Revenue Fund (as per section 4 of the Act).
 - The public inquiry should be both a hearing commission and study commission as specified in the Act; such commissions are investigative, educational, and consultative for the purpose of making recommendations/establishing policies aimed at systemic improvements.
 - The commission should include consultation with key stakeholder groups in the community living sector (self-advocates, families, service providers, and advocacy groups).
 - As stipulated in the Act, the Chief commissioner may retain consultants, investigators, lawyers, expert witnesses or other persons considered necessary to exercise powers and perform duties.
 - The commission's terms of reference should request interim and final reports, with specified timelines.
 - As per the Act, the final report is presented to the Minister and Cabinet, and promptly thereafter to the Legislative Assembly (or the Clerk if the Legislature is not in session).
3. **IMMEDIATELY INFUSE COMMUNITY LIVING SECTOR WITH CRITICAL EMERGENCY AND OPERATIONAL FUNDING**
 - Release \$70 million immediately to address outstanding service requests from fiscal years 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 for adults who have aged out of the youth (MCFD) system and await adult (CLBC) services.
 - Increase sector funding by \$35 million annually, for the next two consecutive fiscal years, to meet anticipated demand for services and supports for youth transitioning to adult care.
 - Review and, as appropriate, restore cuts that have stripped vital services and supports from existing CLBC clients.
 - Review provincial population demographics and conduct a predictive modelling analysis to ensure that operational funding, for day programs and staffed residential services, accurately reflects existing and emerging community living needs.



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4. IMMEDIATELY ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT ADVOCATE FOR ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- Roles and responsibilities of the independent advocate* should include:
 - Representation of adults with developmental disabilities of all ages, in consultation with the families and support providers whom these adults depend upon for care
 - A broad legislated mandate to improve community living supports and outcomes by providing oversight, monitoring, recommendations, and reporting (both legislative and public)
 - Authority to investigate individual and systemic complaints
 - Authority to establish and oversee an independent appeals process

**The framework for this office and the advocate's position should be loosely modelled on the current Representative for Children and Youth, in this case covering adults with developmental disabilities, of all ages, over 19 years of age*

5. INTRODUCE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION SETTING OUT THE INCLUSION RIGHTS AND SUPPORT ENTITLEMENTS OF ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES IN BC

- Establish a Legislative Committee, comprised of key sector stakeholders, under the Ministry of Social Development, to research relevant legislation in other jurisdictions and draft new legislation that addresses identified problems and gaps in the current BC framework.
- Legislation should apply across all relevant sectors (eg: social development; housing; health; education).
- Legislation must be in compliance with national and international principles, including Charter of Rights and Freedoms, human rights, UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, accommodations, as well as citizenship and inclusion.

6. REGULATE HOME SHARING

- Develop and implement a provincial monitoring and regulatory framework for home sharing, covering matters such as service standards, health and safety, respite, training, and oversight.
- Incorporate an evaluation of BC's home sharing sector and service in the proposed community living sector/CLBC external review/public inquiry.
- Support the establishment of a provincial home share providers association, as a network for education and training, peer support and mentoring, and to increase capacity and professionalism in this sector.

In all endeavours, key principals should be applied:

- Authentic, continuous consultation and collaboration with self-advocates and families
- Assurance that individuals with developmental disabilities remain at the centre of all decisions associated with their care (eg: restoring composition CLBC's Board to its original configuration, with key stakeholders represented)
- Demonstrated commitment to transparency

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: communitylivingaction.org