



November 18th, 2011

Denise Turner
Board Chair
Community Living BC
7th Floor, Airport Square
Vancouver, BC
V6P 6G5

Dear Denise Turner:

I appreciate the Board of Directors and senior staff responding to my October 18th request for an interim report, addressing current issues and outlining Community Living British Columbia's longer-term vision, and confirm receipt of your report on November 2nd.

In your report, you acknowledge that, as an organization, "CLBC lost sight of its core values," and as a result, have caused stress and anxiety for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and the system as a whole. I am heartened that "good lives in welcoming communities" remains the principle goal at CLBC, and that this vision looks at how to keep that goal at the core of what CLBC does.

CLBC's vision for longer-term change, while worth ongoing discussion, is a useful and positive reminder of the future we envision as a government and as a community for individuals with developmental disabilities. Together, we remain committed to the ideal of ensuring greater inclusion for British Columbians with developmental disabilities through employment and appropriate supports based on innovative practice. Our decisions will be informed by objective research and analysis of results, both in our province and in other jurisdictions. There is much to be done to achieve such a vision, but above all, there must be a commitment to caring.

The interim report indicates the Board is contemplating work on a three-year strategic plan to further outline how this work will be approached. A longer-term plan will be important in re-establishing a relationship of trust between CLBC and the individuals and families who rely on its services. However, it is important that any plan to move forward take into consideration the results of the audit, analysis and discussion of services that government is currently undertaking.

In the interim, the Board should focus its efforts primarily on providing assistance to CLBC's Interim CEO in addressing its current challenges:

- *Closure of staffed residential living facilities:* I appreciate the clarity your report provides regarding the number of group homes that have been closed and the number that remain an integral part of the province's network of care resources. While costs for one individual can reach into the hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, there must always be sufficient capacity to provide comprehensive, 24-hour care to those that require it. In my mind, there are few situations when an individual should have to move to a new care option unless there is consensus amongst family members and the individual that the new care option is preferable. It is important that we think of these environments as *homes*, rather than as *placements*. Moves without such agreement must be limited to the specific situations referenced on page 12 of your report; only upon the consideration of all other alternatives; and after engaging in sincere consultation and careful preparation for such a move.
- *Responsiveness to requests for service:* More needs to be done to increase the openness and transparency of CLBC regarding the timeliness of service and the degrees of need or urgency associated with requests. I take note of your request for direction on developing standards in this area and I look forward to continuing further discussion with the Board on this topic with a goal of quickly – but thoughtfully – developing a suitable tracking system that instills clarity and confidence.
- *Improved communications with individuals and families:* In the report, you make an important commitment to “improving decision making and communications with individuals and families and reaffirm that the individuals and families (CLBC) serves are its first priority.” In this report and in my discussions with you and with the Interim CEO, it has become clear that we share an understanding of the importance of listening earnestly to the individuals and families CLBC serves to better understand their experiences and needs. But CLBC must commit clearly and unequivocally to doing more than just listening. CLBC exists to support British Columbians with developmental disabilities and must return them to the centre of decision making, ensuring that their needs and goals are not just heard, but also supported.
- *Youth in transition/cross-ministry discussions:* I agree with the report's characterization of this area as a “cross-ministry challenge that requires thoughtful consideration.” At the same time, the discussions and meetings that I – as well as my fellow MLAs – have had with families have made it clear that CLBC should reconsider how it develops plans for families with a young person who is likely to become eligible for CLBC services. Important steps have been taken by CLBC and government ministries to identify these youth at younger ages, and improve the planning and transition process. Too often, though, plans are developed that raise expectations which are not met. Part of the challenge may be funding. Part of the challenge may be the way CLBC services align with the services of other ministries. But we must also

consider whether part of the challenge may be the assessment and planning process and service delivery model, which may not adequately differentiate and develop suitable responses for families' unique needs.

Apart from the above points, the Board and organization's immediate and medium-term direction should follow the course outlined in the report. I anticipate that I will be in a position to provide further direction as additional information is gathered and considered through the audit and deputy ministers' work. I am also committed to working with CLBC to improve its funding model and find a solution that balances the interests arising from anticipated caseload increases with finite budgets that require prudent management, increased innovation, and ingenuity. I look forward to the work underway informing necessary planning for effective budget management for government, my ministry, and CLBC.

CLBC has accomplished a lot, which the Board, staff at CLBC and its service providers, and all British Columbians can be very proud of. While the majority of those who receive services from CLBC are likely satisfied with the services they receive, current issues must be addressed openly and considerately. We must rebuild the confidence and trust of those individuals through swift but sensible action, so that the longer term vision for individuals with developmental disabilities in our province can be realized.

Yours truly,



Honorable Stephanie Cadieux
Minister of Social Development

