



BC Community Living Action Group (BC-CLAG)

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

PRESS RELEASE:

Community Living Action group renews call for public inquiry into CLBC

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Community Living advocates are renewing their call for a full public inquiry into chronic problems in BC's system of community living supports for adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

The BC-Community Living Action Group (BC-CLAG), which represents a wide range of provincial stakeholders, says government has a responsibility to get to the bottom of the problems plaguing Community Living BC.

University of Victoria Professor Michael Prince, a BC-CLAG partner, addressed the rationale and proposed mandate for a public inquiry in a background paper released this week.

BC-CLAG partners recognize that government has taken some initial steps toward creating new service models that would better integrate services and place more emphasis on employment supports. However, a series of internal investigations last fall neglected to address key challenges in BC's system of community living supports.

Those challenges remain unresolved, says BC-CLAG, the most notable being the chronic gap between CLBC's mandate to support adults who cannot live independently and the resources available to meet growing demands for such supports. That gap continues to place adults at risk and creates serious crises for:

- young families whose children are no longer eligible for children's services when they turn 19;
- elderly parents and other aging relatives who can no longer support a loved one with a developmental disability; and for
- adults of all ages without family supports.

"We have been grappling with these very same issues for almost two decades now," said BC-CLAG partner Anita Dadson, president of BC FamilyNet and a long-time leader in B.C.'s community living movement. "Despite what appears to be a never-ending parade of reports, new plans, and promises, the core problems have still not been confronted and remain very much unresolved."

This history of failed reforms continues to be raised in the media and through ongoing complaints from families.

"The fact is there is a fundamental loss of public confidence. CLBC's original vision—to support people with disabilities' right to independence, choice, and support—has been lost," said University of Victoria professor, Michael Prince, an expert on disability and social policy.

Prince maintains that these serious and urgent issues are matters of public interest, and a thorough investigation requires an independent review of CLBC, preferably a commission of public inquiry under the *Public Inquiry Act*. A public inquiry differs significantly from the internal reviews previously carried out by the government, according to Prince, through the appointment of an independent commissioner, the development of specific terms of reference, broad and diverse community consultation, and access to resources, including expert opinion and research.

The backgrounder, "BC's community living crisis: public inquiry urgently needed to restore a shared vision, family confidence, and public accountability," can be downloaded from the BC-CLAG website: CommunityLivingAction.org

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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. BC-CLAG includes: BC Association for Community Living, BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, Moms on the Move, BC FamilyNet, BC Government and Service Employees' Union, Developmental Disabilities Association, Michael Prince (University Victoria), Health Sciences Association of BC, Hospital Employees' Union, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees. More info: CommunityLivingAction.org

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