



November 12, 2015

Minister Michelle Stilwell  
Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation  
Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC

Dear Minister Stilwell:

**Re: Follow up to FamilyNet Meeting with you on November 5, 2015**

First, our appreciation for your willingness to meet with FamilyNet members on November 5. We welcomed the opportunity to share views on how to meet our common goals of supporting people with disabilities to live with safety, health, and dignity in the community.

You brought to us the announcement of greatly increased assets that can be held by a person with a disability, without jeopardizing basic benefits. We brought to you recommendations for making CLBC more "user friendly", based on our own experiences. These are both an important part of the picture in the lives of the very diverse people who can benefit from support.

Very regrettably, the short meeting time did not allow for a more thorough understanding of each other's views. We understood you to place high value on independence and providing our family members with the tools to make them so.

This, of course, is what we have done for our family members all our lives and we are incredibly proud of the courage, resilience, and just plain grit of our loved ones in the face of multiple challenges. However the nature of developmental disabilities and autism puts some constraints on what is possible, and increasing age and dementia mean more supports are required in order to meet our basic goals. This is where CLBC becomes a critical part of the picture, and an efficient family-friendly process makes all the difference.

We were encouraged by the presence of your Deputy Minister, Sheila Taylor, and appreciated the extra time she gave us. We understand that CLBC is in fact working on some of the issues we raised, although it is a lengthy process. In fact, in a previous meeting with Seonag Macrae, we felt a sincere intent to change CLBC's culture, and we applaud that. CLBC's Strategy on Aging is noteworthy and we encourage its implementation.

We believe that one route to improving CLBC response to families is to change the board composition to include family members and individuals receiving supports. Appointments based on recommendations from groups such as Inclusion BC could bring knowledgeable, well-connected voices to the board.

FamilyNet wishes you all the best as you lead this important ministry. It is our sincere hope that you will give a well-functioning, respectful CLBC an important place in your provision of support to people who live with disabilities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present our views.

Yours truly,

BC Family Net Society

Maria Squance  
Karen Philipchuk  
Linda Derkach

c.c. Deputy Minister Sheila Taylor