

Stories and Letters outlining concerns and impact of funding and service cuts:

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Received Feb. 23, 2004

Premier Gordon Campbell Parliament Buildings Victoria, B.C.

Dear Mr. Campbell:

As elderly parents with growing health issues of our own, we are fearful for the future of our developmentally disabled daughter. Just like you and everyone else, she deserves to be treated in a respectful and responsible way. Our fear is that the proposed cuts by the provincial government will have a very detrimental affect on the life of our daughter and many others like her.

Our daughter is both mentally and physically challenged and needs 24 hours care and assistance; because she has very little communication skills.

A group home in Richmond where our daughter has lived for 15 years, is the only home she has known. With the help of well trained and experienced staff who are able to deal with many difficult situations such as behaviors and health issues. She has gotten to be able to live a life with some quality as with her three house mates. They have lived together in this house for most of the last 15 years. They have learn to be comfortable with the staff and the surroundings. Also they have a growing bond with each other: This house with the staff, are what our daughter and her house mates need and we do not want our daughter to be uprooted and shuffled elsewhere.

If these group homes are closed, what will we do? What will happen to our daughter? Our fear often turns to anger, when we realized that the government does not have a plan that will responsibly take care of the most vulnerable, most can not care for themselves independently. Like our daughter, many are in need of 24 hour supervision and support and some have absolutely no family support. We are calling on the provincial government to do the right thing, the responsible thing by restoring funding that will ensure people with developmental disabilities are care for with the dignity and respect we all deserve.

Yours truly,  
Robert and Rose Luey

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Received Feb. 22, 2004

I am a 66 year old mother of a 39 year old man who has a developmental disability. I live on a fixed income. My son's behavioural challenges have been too great for me to handle at home. My son has had many placements over the past 21 years but has never successfully lived in a home with more than one other resident.

The MCFD is trying to move my son from a group home where he has lived comfortably and done very well for the past 2 years. My son sees this home as his home. The MCFD is doing this to save money. I believe that moving him under these circumstances would be very detrimental to him. I believe that a move will destabilize him. This is the happiest and most settled he has ever been and moving him to a different setting will be extremely upsetting to him. I feel strongly that my son has a right to have his needs met.

Sincerely,  
Beatrice Lyon

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Received Feb. 18, 2004

The cutbacks are impacting our family and those in our care in more ways than the dollars that will not come to us. We have had in our care Joe (not his real name) for 25 yrs, and then to receive a letter from the govt. to sign or we will find other arrangements for a young adult with high needs... is reprehensible. Not the

monies, but the careless attitude toward a human being. Besides taking the 1.75 % less, his daily program of 4 hrs, has also been reduced (due to cutbacks at the centre where he attends) And then for the other three children with special needs: it is the cutback to schools that will keep them from having a program suited for them because there is no one on one help. It is getting very difficult to provide pre-care, and special needs care when all the supports are being removed. Who will be left to look after our special needs people. thank you

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Received Feb. 13, 2004

To Whom it may concern:

My child has very recently been given the Autism grant of \$6000.00 (per year). My concerns to meet her criteria for help are not being met because there is not enough money to get started. To help my daughter with her challenges she needs a Behavior Consultant, a Behavior Interventionist, a Counselor, and quite possibly an Occupational Therapist if not other professionals. To have a proper plan in place to begin with there needs to be more money available. Once my daughter has learned the program she won't need as much money for her challenges.

The other concern of importance is at home care for my daughter. My job demands she get up very early to get to daycare. This is not going very well. She does not get out of bed and I generally help her get dressed, feed her, and help her with her hygiene to be out on time(if she lets me. She's very independent.) She operates on her own schedule which can be very frustrating.

At this time I am not able to sign a contract with the ministry for funding for after March 31st. My social worker is gone on Feb 29th. Who is replacing her? Don't know and neither does she. We are only just getting started only to not have funding in place for April 1st? My daughter will suffer because no money is in place therefore the "plan" is put on hold.

This e-mail can be posted on your web site. Thank you.

C. March

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Received Thursday, February 12, 2004

I would like to let you know that the (service provider name deleted) who have provided service to my multiple-handicapped son for 11 years, (he's now 26 years old), have just informed me that they will no longer provide service for medically involved individuals. Apparently there are minimal numbers affected by this decision. As of the end of March, my son will have to move from their care. At the moment his social worker is scrambling for funds and placement for him. His medical problems are uncontrolled seizures, a mental handicap, and a degree of cerebral palsy, but he's mobile. The problem is that he requires 1-1 help and this is costly. He has also required several trips to emergency for seizure protocol and sutures. I might note that he had the suture emergencies from before he entered his group home. With the government not allowing more funding, it seems to me that the (service provider name deleted) has chosen to put the burden on the most vulnerable and defenseless individuals, those most difficult to place. It feels as though they are using them as pawns in their dealings with the current government. Just for your information

- a parent

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Feb. 12 Update from Basia and Henrik:

My son's group home is being closed. The latest date is March 31/04.

Received Jan. 20, 2003

I have received copies of your emails from the group home my son lives at in (city in lower mainland).

Yes, it is truly a worrying situation in regards to another round of budget cuts for community living. It's absolutely mind boggling to think how many lives would be affected by the severe budget cuts.

I had sent an email to our MLA venting. Naturally I did not hear back. I will mail tomorrow the Family Membership form.

Sincerely,  
Basia and Henrik

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Approval to post the following letter was received Mar. 28:

Feb.11,2004  
Honourable Christy Clark  
Minister of Children and Family Development Parliament Buildings

Dear Ms. Clark;

I write to you on behalf of my sister who is a 52 year old adult with Downs Syndrome. She lives in a group home in the Lower Mainland operated by (name of service provider agency is deleted). The agency is facing funding cuts that will impact their ability to support the costs of maintaining the adult group homes of over 70 other people in her same position. The agency already uses a significant portion of their fund-raised and business centre dollars to offset the costs of supporting adults in group homes. They serve some 2000 clients in total covering all age groups and a variety of levels of care.

I have watched the growth of this service provider over several decades. From a small organization in which my mother volunteered I watched it adapt to a different organizational style to meet the requirements of government funding. It did not change its volunteer heart and continues to fund-raise money to meet the needs of its clients.

In a recent fund-raising letter, the President of the agency points out that there haven't been any increases, from the provincial government, in the food budget for group homes since the late 1980's. These people must rely on the agency and donors to meet food requirements.

Every dollar given to this agency is used with great thrift. Data provided by the provincial government proves the agency's cost effectiveness. Therefore every dollar taken away represents cuts to programs.

Now, with the resignation of Minister Hogg, the dismissal of Deputy Minister Haynes and the resignation of Consultant Doug Walls, there is left a temporary funding structure that destabilizes the current one. The agency cannot make fiscal predictions to set staffing contracts in place. The proposed funding is 11% less and the agency has shown that it already supports 18% of the provinces population with only 10% of the Community Living funding.

With the funding cuts comes a proposed change to the method of funding whereby the families would be responsible for providing care. The premise that families would be able to provide a similar level of care as the professional health care system seems to me to be flawed particularly when the professionals are already expressing concern to the Ministry. The inventors of this plan have shown less than acceptable business acumen in the Ministry's affairs already. I, for one, disagree with the plan. I hope that new consideration is to be given to the care of my sister and all others in her situation.

I know the staff of my sister's residence are anxious about their future. I have not seen this reflected in my sister and I credit the staffs discretion in keeping it from her. However the Vancouver Sun has visited her home and an article was written in that paper, on Jan. 29, about the state of affairs of the Ministry. What must happen before stability can be created in the lives of all these people?

The Community Living Authority affects the lives of people in every riding of the communities served by the agency that supports my sister. Although this might not be a large number in each riding, cumulatively it is a significant part of the Authorities responsibilities. I hope the input of all affected constituents of the 13 MLAs of those communities is forwarded to Caucus before any further action is taken.

I hope that my letter increases your level of awareness and concern for this issue. I hope that you will use your good name and position to advance this cause on behalf of my sister and her friends. They need benevolent representation.

- a Vancouver family member

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Received Feb. 2, 2004

Dear Minister Clark:

I am writing concerning the Ministry's plans to transfer management of community living services to Community Living BC by June 1, 2004.

As a sister of a person with a disability, and active volunteer on provincial, regional and local associations for community living for over thirty years, I wholeheartedly support the vision of community participation for all people with disabilities. Such principles established by the IA and founding Coalition as self and family determination and choice, flexibility, community development, and reduction of waitlists, will, when implemented, indeed bring a new era in the lives of families and individuals in British Columbia.

However, I am deeply concerned that little of this will become reality in the face of the budget reductions to community living services. In keeping with the important principles of fiscal responsibility, accountability, and transparency, I am urging you to call a moratorium on the transfer of Community Living services until the following have occurred:

- \* government guarantee of a dollar figure for CLBC for a 3 year period
- \* a costed implementation plan for Community Living BC made public
- \* widespread opportunity for consultation on the costed plan

My family's priority, and that of the families I know in the Elk Valley, is assurance of stable services and supports. I urge you to do everything possible to ensure that the future CLBC will be able to deliver these in keeping with its vision and

principles.

Yours sincerely

Maria Squance

cc David Driscoll, chair, IA  
Anita Dadsen, chair, Family Net  
John Kehler, chair, BCACL

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