

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

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**Received October 7, 2004:**

While I have not always agreed with all the information circulated by FamilyNet, I do agree with your relentless efforts to bring balance to the insanity and never ending 'restructuring' of Community Living Services. I have been involved in the devolution process to community governance and I can sum it up in one word, Turmoil. In retrospect, the dollars wasted thus far, from the inception of the Transitional Steering Committee to the public forums, to the endless consultants fees and ultimately back to MCFD control is at the very least an embarrassment. If we consider what those thousands of dollars wasted could have done to change the lives of many on waitlists, no one could argue that direct services were where dollars should have gone.

When will this ministry step up to the plate and provide a minimum of core services for every person with a developmental disability? Core services are defined as a basic right to have shelter, food, health services, disability benefits, and a day service. When will the have and have not end? We waste more money on lavish administration budgets in service agencies than we do on direct services. We have protection clauses in union contracts that prevent elimination of those with misplaced values. We have biases and prejudicial policies that are outdated and harmful. We have funding allocations that are based on life and limb not health and safety while government brags about surplus revenue. We penalize the lowest paid service providers motivated by the highest funded agencies.

At a time when community needs more than ever to be united, we are dramatically and frighteningly divided. The move to community governance has driven wedges into the stakeholder community the likes of which may never be removed. The desperate search for and retainment of money has placed many into competitive misery. The illusive attainment of efficiencies has spiraled many services into chaos. Let's not forget the insanity of the esteemed Accreditation. The achievement of a 3 year Accreditation supposedly is touted as the end all and be all for accountability, person centered, consumer focused services. Finally, we have the answer! No, in this writer's opinion, we have paper and lots of it, but good paper does not and will not equate to good lives. The fundamental flaw within Accreditation is that there is no test for the values and true commitment to those providing services. It's a well documented testimony that in Washington State, during an Accreditation exercise in a large institution, a woman lay dying on the floor below holding a sign saying 'Help Me'. She died. What did Accreditation do to save her life? Realizing that this is a rather provocative submission, I would challenge others to seriously consider the instability of the current system and perhaps even CLBC particularly if we are rushing forward with the hope that change will be better. Perhaps it may be, perhaps not. One thing is abundantly clear; very few of us have been asked what we think and even fewer are aware or understand the current initiative.

Let's stop kidding ourselves. The quest for monumental change starts at the bottom not at the top. For decades we have band-aided our problems through crisis response rather than prevention. We can probably agree that crisis response is significantly more expensive. Maybe it's time to take back our communities and demand to be listened to. Who better to listen and learn from than the responsible families and their children who have their lives invested in the integrity and wisdom of this current government, those in leadership positions both within MCFD and CLBC. I hope they will listen.

Service Provider

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