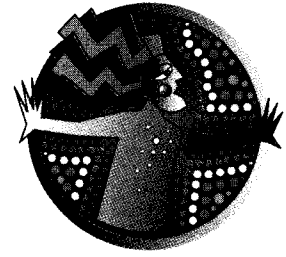


BC Coalition of People with Disabilities

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Over 30 years of advocacy

August 13th 2010

Honourable Rich Coleman
Minister of Housing and Social Development
Room 128, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Coleman,

We are writing to express our deep concern about the assessment and relocation program of group home residents that is currently being undertaken by Community Living BC (CLBC).

Group home residents are evidently being assessed for their suitability for alternative residential arrangements without their knowledge or permission or that of their families. They are then being informed that as a result of these assessments they must relocate to a home sharing arrangement against their wishes.

Many group home residents have resided in the same professionally operated facilities for years; their needs have not changed. The thought of living without their supports and group home colleagues is terrifying, as we recently saw when a group home was under threat of closure in Powell River.

We congratulate you and CLBC for responding to the concerns of these Powell River group home residents and their families, but are concerned about other group home residents who may find themselves in a similarly devastating situation.


While residential arrangements other than group homes can work for some people with disabilities, there must be appropriate oversight and supports in place. As well, the service consumer and their family need to feel comfortable with the arrangement and to have selected it as their preferred model of care. This cannot be the case when clients are forced into a residential option against their will and that of their family.

We appreciate the importance of having a clear understanding of an individual's service needs and of a fair allocation of resources; however, the needs and input of this vulnerable community and their families must be a priority in decision-making on residential care and we are alarmed that this does not currently appear to be the case.

The BCCPD respectfully urges that your Ministry and CLBC discontinue the current relocation program and establish a new framework, based on consultation with service consumers and their families, that truly reflects their needs. Our community can then feel confident that residential placement decisions will be made with clients' best interests as a priority.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Johanna Johnson'.

Johanna Johnson
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Dyson'.

Jane Dyson
Executive Director