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British Columbia

British Columbia offers one of the most unique approaches to disability support delivery in Canada. A crown agency called Community Living BC (CLBC) is the primary provider of services. CLBC has focused on creating stronger life transition planning programs, offering a range of programming both to municipalities and First Nation reserve communities and providing multiple kinds of funding options which families and individuals can choose from to suit their needs. BC is one of the biggest provincial spenders on disability support programs.



In spite of high spending and efforts towards providing quality supports, the CLBC has just undergone a major restructuring.

- After 4300 requests for assistance being filed to the Advocate for Service Quality (an office that manages complaints against CLBC)¹ and the Minister in charge of CLBC being fired for closing dozens of group homes², **the Premier ordered a review of the CLBC** in 2011. The review revealed a number of problems: weak adult programming with no full-day program to replace high school classes, lack of coordination across ministries and agencies providing disability-related supports, poor consultation with families transitioning from group homes to independent living models of care and lack of data tracking on the demand for particular services³.
- In 2013, there were **budget cuts to programming** for individuals with developmental disabilities despite an increased demand and government election campaign promises to fund developmental service worker wage increases were not fulfilled⁴. As a result, agencies cut back programming further in order to meet their commitments to higher staff wages⁵.
- In December 2013, a **province-wide consultation** on the top issues affecting those with disabilities was launched. Thousands of BC residents contributed feedback highlighting the need for more involvement in decision-making processes, easier access to information about disability services, increased information-sharing between government ministries providing disability supports, increased funding for personal supports, home care and supportive and accessible housing options and higher disability assistance rates⁶. In response, the BC government released “Accessibility 2024”, an action plan to make BC the “most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities by 2024”⁷. Unfortunately, the action plan’s avoidance of committing to many tangible targets and oversight of important issues like mental health has evoked criticism from many disability groups and advocates⁸.

[1] Deputy Minister’s Office. (2011). *Improving Services to People with Developmental Disabilities: Deputy Minister’s Review of Community Living British Columbia* (p.6). Retrieved

from http://www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/pwd/docs/Improving_Services_to_People_with_Developmental_Disabilities_Report_FINAL.pdf

[2] Mason, G. (2012, June 22). Government funding caused Community living BC Mess. *The Globe & Mail* [Online]. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/government-fumbling-caused-community-living-bc-mess/article4365539/>

[3] Deputy Minister's Office. (2011). *Improving Services to People with Developmental Disabilities: Deputy Minister's Review of Community Living British Columbia*. Retrieved from http://www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/pwd/docs/Improving_Services_to_People_with_Developmental_Disabilities_Report_FINAL.pdf

[4] Kines, L. (2013, Feb 20). B.C. plans to slash funding for adults with disabilities. *The Times Colonist* [Online]. Retrieved from <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/b-c-plans-to-slash-funding-for-adults-with-disabilities-1.77768>

[5] Sandborn, T. (2013, Oct 2). Government Reneged on Wage Promises, Say Community Social Service Agencies. *The Tyee* [Online]. Retrieved from <http://thetyee.ca/News/2013/10/02/Govt-Reneged-on-Wage-Promises/>

[6] Government of British Columbia. (2014). *Disability Consultation Report: Moving Together Toward an Accessible BC*. Retrieved from http://engage.gov.bc.ca/disabilitywhitepaper/files/2014/05/Disability-Consultation-Report_accessible_web_FINAL.pdf

[7] Government of British Columbia. (2014). *Accessibility 2024*. Retrieved from http://engage.gov.bc.ca/disabilitywhitepaper/files/2014/06/Accessibility-Summit-LargeType_Accessible.pdf

[8] See Disability Alliance BC's response (<http://blog.disabilityalliancebc.org/?p=2217>), Spinal Cord Injury BC's response (<http://sci-bc.ca/news-and-blog/accessibility-2024-step-forward-enough/>), Kendra Milne's (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives) response (<http://blogs.theprovince.com/2014/07/02/kendra-milne-b-c-s-new-plan-for-people-with-disabilities-isnt-good-enough/>), and this article from *News1130* (<http://www.news1130.com/2014/06/18/forced-to-survive-on-dollars-per-day-for-meals-critics-slam-bcs-disability-benefit/>).

Alberta

One of the wealthier provinces in Canada, Alberta has implemented some innovative approaches to delivering disability supports. Alberta is one of the only provinces to make a serious effort to put a single ministry in charge of disability support programs: the Human Services Ministry. A separate income program has been established for those living with developmental disabilities, the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped, and Alberta has a policy of tailoring supports for each individual and ensuring families are involved in planning and decision-making processes.



On paper, Alberta's support system looks strong, **however, good policy and program ideas have not necessarily resulted in good practices or outcomes.**

- After complaints about lack of consistency in access to services in supports across Alberta's six service regions, a review and "transformation" of the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program was started in 2008¹.
- The transformation process has extended far beyond the original timeframe as individuals living with disabilities and their families have continually voiced concern that consultation with those affected by the PDD program has been inadequate².
- The 2014 Alberta Budget cut \$42 million in funding from the PDD program in spite of mass protests against the cuts the previous summer³.
- The Alberta Disabilities Forum group has criticized Alberta's Home Care program for years, claiming that "current services and programs remain fragmented, are difficult to navigate and are not consumer oriented."⁴ Further, they have repeatedly emphasized the negative impacts that lack of appropriate housing options and inadequate funding levels for respite care, disability aids and support staff wages have on Albertans living with disabilities and their families.⁵

[1] Government of Alberta. (2013). *Report on Spring 2013 Persons with Developmental Disabilities Community Conversations* (p.2). Retrieved from <http://www.linxconnect.ca/content/WhatWeHeard.pdf>

[2] Alberta Disability Workers Association. (2013, June 6). PDD Announcement Reassures Families. Retrieved from http://www.adwa.ca/pdd_announcement_reassures_families & St. Albert Gazette. Opinion. (2013, June 5). Time to consult on PDD. *The St. Albert Gazette*. Retrieved from <http://www.stalbertgazette.com/article/20130605/SAG0902/306059984/0/SAG>

[3] Crofts, A. (2014, April 20). Province cuts \$42 million in programming for persons with disabilities. *The St-Albert Gazette*. Retrieved from <http://www.stalbertgazette.com/article/20130420/SAG0801/304209986/-1/sag0801/province-cuts-42-million-in-programming-for-persons-with-disabilites>

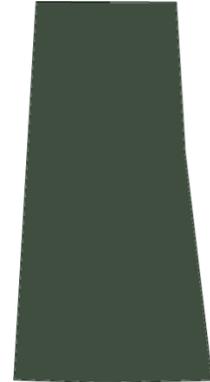
[4] Alberta Disabilities Forum. (2014). *Linked In: Meeting the Needs of Alberta's Home Care Clients*. Retrieved from <http://adforum.ca/files/download/887c148c2c14b44>

[5] Alberta Disabilities Forum. (2011). *Addressing the Needs of Albertans with Disabilities in Home, Supportive and Long-term Care Settings*. Retrieved from <http://adforum.ca/files/download/8bda76301e77987>

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan has made a lot of progress in terms of developing an adequate support system for those living with developmental disabilities. Recently the Government of Saskatchewan:

- Issued 14 recommendations to help successfully transition the last of individuals with disabilities residing in an institution into community living programs by 2016¹.
- Developed a separate income support program for people with disabilities, the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability Program, which provides more support than regular welfare, considers individual circumstances in its payment formula and has reduced reporting requirements².
- Eliminated waiting lists for access to residential and day program placements in 2013 by injecting \$62.5 million into disability services and supports³.



The Government of Saskatchewan is in the process of a province-wide consultation to develop a comprehensive disability strategy⁴. **One challenge the government faces is to find adequate resources to finance the resulting system of supports.**

[1] Government of Saskatchewan. (2013, Aug 26). Government responds to Valley View report [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=c5964d5f-5d92-4482-a2fa-a5ab605fbabc>

[2] Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services. (2008). *Final Recommendations of the Task Team on Income Support for People with Disabilities*. Retrieved from <http://www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/Backgrounder-ODI.pdf>

[3] Government of Saskatchewan. (2013a). *Backgrounder: Community Living 440 Waitlist*. Retrieved from <http://www.gov.sk.ca/adx.aspx/adxGetMedia.aspx?mediaId=909fca06-6a88-414e-b809-92fca269a731&PN=Shared>

[4] Wilger, D. (2014, May 8). Provincial disability strategy unfolding. *The News Review*. Retrieved from <http://www.yorktonnews.com/article/20140508/YORKTONNEWS0101/305089989/-1/yorktonnews/provincial-disability-strategy-unfolding>

Manitoba

The hub of past disability reform movements in Canada, Manitoba has been recognized for its efforts to provide progressive disability supports. These include person-centered planning and direct funding, which families may choose to manage independently or with assistance from a service provider¹.

However, **Manitoba is not a wealthy province and struggles to provide adequate services.** Those in rural areas are generally under-served² and spending on supports will be strained further should the province be forced to close its last remaining institutional facility for individuals with developmental disabilities, The Manitoba Developmental Centre. The public has criticized the government for continued use of an institutional setting, resulting in threats of a lawsuit and calls for facility closure³. Should the institution close, the province will need to figure out how to fund the costs associated with transitioning its residents into community-based services and housing.



[1] Manitoba Family Services. Government of Manitoba. (2014). Community Living disAbility Services. Available online at http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/pwd/supported_living.html

[2] Mackenzie, M. (2014). *Community Living Funding Crisis in Westman and Parkland*. Available online at <http://www.abilitiesmanitoba.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/The-Community-Living-Funding-Crisis-in-Westman-and-Parkland-April-2014.pdf>

[3] Lett, D. (2014, June 2). Operating MDC may bring legal woes for province. *The Winnipeg Free Press*. Available online at <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/operating-mdc-may-bring-legal-woes-for-province-261474831.html>

Ontario

In 2014, the Ontario government announced an additional \$810 million in funding over three years for developmental services¹. While this was welcome news to families and service providers, a number of concerns remain. Wait lists for services in Ontario are long and the funding may not be enough to eliminate them. The support system is also very fragmented, with supports delivered through four different ministries and virtually no support to help individuals with developmental disabilities transition between critical life stages such as youth to adult.



There have been two recent investigations looking into the crisis in Ontario:

- The Ontario Ombudsmen released a report in August 2016, titled [“Nowhere to Turn”](#), after a 4-year investigation into services for adults with developmental disabilities. The report notes: “The present demand for services far outstrips the supply, leaving thousands stranded on waiting lists.” The Ombudsmen produced 60 recommendations for reform. (The report was scheduled to be released in 2013 but was severely delayed due to the high number of complaints received².)
- The Ontario Select Committee on Developmental Services was formed in May 2013. The Committee’s interim report, released in March 2014, highlighted a number of issues raised during their consultation process: long waiting lists for services, poor support through transition stages and lengthy re-application processes, lack of client and family involvement in decision-making and lack of appropriate housing options³. The Committee’s final report, released in July 2014, is available [here](#).

[1] Ministry of Finance. Government of Ontario. (2014, Apr 11). Eliminating Waitlists for Government Services [Press Release]. Available online <http://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2014/04/eliminating-waitlists-for-developmental-services.html>

[2] Reported the *Hamilton Spectator* on September 19, 2013 (“Dundas residents bid in Queen’s Park spotlight” by Teviah Moro. Available online <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/4115769-dundas-residential-bid-in-queen-s-park-spotlight/>

[3] Ontario Select Committee on Developmental Services. (2014). *Interim Report*. Available online http://www.ontla.on.ca/committee-proceedings/committee-reports/files_pdf/INTERIMREPORTENG-Final.pdf

Quebec

On paper, Quebec's Regional Service Centre model is very strong; it emphasizes consistent, person-centered planning with coordinated support through life transition periods, provides portable provincial supports and is a "one-stop shop" for families seeking supports. It has also realized massive cost-savings in comparison to the institutional model.

But, in reality, those utilizing supports know there is little consistency in available services and supports across Regional Service Centre areas, weak communication between Centres and complicated transitions between support types, especially later in life.

The 2013 Auditor General's report found support services for the disabled to be in a critical state with little documentation of individuals' needs and lack of provincial coordination, which has resulted in unmanageably long wait lists. The current system for funding healthcare and social services is under review and poised for a massive reform¹.



One notable aspect of the Quebec developmental sector is the Department of Professional Services in each Regional Service Centre. These departments allow collaboration between academic institutions and service providers in regard to implementation of researched best practices, evaluation of programming and overall knowledge transfer.

[1] Auditor General of Quebec. (2013). *Report of the Auditor General of Quebec to the National Assembly 2013-2014* (pgs.9-10). Available online http://www.vgq.qc.ca/en/en_publications/en_rapport-annuel/en_fichiers/en_Rapport2013-2014-VOR-Printemps.pdf

New Brunswick

New Brunswick has struggled to provide effective and adequate supports for its disabled population. A *Disability Action Plan* was released in 2012 following extensive cross-province consultations.



The Plan commits the government to key objectives including:

- strengthening supports and improving access;
- creating a separate income program for individuals with disabilities and increasing subsidies for supports;
- increasing data collection on service provision and outcomes;
- minimizing wait times; and
- reviewing home support and children's programs¹.

A 2013 update found that little progress had been made on these objectives. However, the government has committed to having a separate income assistance program in place and, in the meantime, wage exemptions have been applied to individuals living with disabilities who receive Social Assistance².

[1] Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons. (2012). *Disability Action Plan: The time for action is now*. Available

online: <http://www.gnb.ca/0048/PCSDP/PDF/PublicationsWebpage/DAPReport2012ENG.pdf>

[2] Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons. (2013). *Disability Action Plan: The time for action is now – Status Update December 3, 2013*. Available

online: <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/pcsdpcpmcph/pdf/publications/2013DAPReport.pdf>

Newfoundland & Labrador

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has struggled to provide adequate developmental supports. The province has been criticized for providing Alternative Family Care providers greater access to supports than biological families and for failing to provide appropriate accommodations for individuals with developmental disabilities; many are forced to reside in nursing homes¹.



However, government-funded services and supports are slowly expanding, and some innovative approaches are being introduced:

- A direct-funding model was adopted in 2000 to allow many individuals greater control over their housing and supports².
- Support Trusts were created to enable individuals and their families to offset the extraordinary costs of living with a disability. The savings collect interest and have a maximum tax exemption of \$100, 000³.
- The 2012 *Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disability* includes a core provision to reduce the costs of disability supports⁴.

The 2013 budget included millions of extra dollars in funding for home supports, long-term care, respite services and a pilot program wherein family caregivers can receive income from the government for informal care services⁵.

[1] CBC Radio. (May 9, 2013). "Disability Help" on *Crosstalk*. Podcast available online <http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/Canada/NL/Audio/ID/2384230305/?page=28>

[2] Institution Watch. (2007). Provincial/Territorial Updates: Newfoundland and Labrador. Retrieved from <http://www.institutionwatch.ca/iwupdates-app/prov.Newfoundland%20and%20Labrador>

[3] Department of Advanced Education and Skills. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (2013). Support Trusts. Retrieved from <http://www.aes.gov.nl.ca/income-support/supporttrusts.html>

[4] Disability Policy Office. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (2012). *Access. Inclusion. Equality. Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador*. Retrieved from http://www.aes.gov.nl.ca/disabilities/dpo_access_inclusion_equality.pdf

[5] Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. (2013). *Estimates 2013: A Sound Plan, A Secure Future*. Retrieved from <http://www.budget.gov.nl.ca/budget2013/estimates/estimatesbook2013.pdf>

Nova Scotia

Recognizing that services and supports needed to be strengthened, Nova Scotia's 2013 budget set aside funding to create a *Disabilities Framework* that increased funding for current services by \$7 million¹.

To further improve the sector, the Disabled Persons Commission, a group of individuals with disabilities involved in policy development, worked with the provincial government to secure a promise to develop an *Accessibility for Nova Scotians Act* to protect rights to disability supports and open up new financial assistance options².



Notably, the Public Health Agency of Canada funded a project in Nova Scotia to conduct research on how to structure supports for seniors with developmental disabilities. The study found the province unprepared to address the problem but identified a number of opportunities for improvements³. As this is a common concern across Canada, the findings are now influencing policy development in other provinces as well.

[1] Disabled Persons Commission. (2013). *Provincial Budget 2013: Highlights for Persons with Disabilities*. Available online: <http://disability.novascotia.ca/content/budget-2013-14>

[2] Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB). (Nov 28, 2013). Public Session: Advocating for an Accessibility for Nova Scotians with Disabilities Act. Available online at http://www.cnib.ca/en/news/Pages/20131028_Public-Session-Advocating-for-an-Accessibility-for-Nova-Scotians-with-Disabilities-Act.aspx

[3] McClellan, M. Nova Scotia Community College School of Health and Human Services. (2009). *The Next Stage: Retirement Planning for Older Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Final Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/Next-Stage-Final-Report-April-2009.pdf>

Prince Edward Island

Arguably the most resource-poor of the Maritime provinces, PEI allocates disability supports on the basis of unmet needs. This means individuals with disabilities and their families are expected to pursue all other support options—private insurance, federal programs, grants and loans—prior to becoming eligible provincial disability supports. Those who are eligible are still expected to contribute to support costs as much as possible¹.



Non-government organizations attempt to fill provincial service gaps, but services and supports are still limited, especially in small communities.

PEI does not have any specialized supports for seniors living with disabilities, as they were only recognized as a demographic affected by disabilities in 2010².

[1] Prince Edward Island Community Services, Seniors and Labour Department. (2011). *PEI Disability Support Program Policy Manual*. Retrieved

from http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/DSP_Pol_Apr2011.pdf

[2] PEI Disability Alert. (2010, Sep 14). PEI Finally Recognizes 8, 980 Seniors Have Disabilities. *Disabled World News* [Online]. Available online: <http://www.disabled-world.com/news/canada/pei/seniors-disability.php>

The Yukon, Northwest Territories & Nunavut

Until recently the majority of territorial residents diagnosed with disabilities would be sent to residential facilities in the south where they could receive necessary services. The territorial governments are slowly beginning to make improvements, offering limited residential options and services to residents and increasing spending on disability supports.

However, the territories are faced with huge hurdles:

- weak government capacity, which makes it difficult to access information about existing supports and programs;
- a severe housing shortage, which affects individuals with disabilities disproportionately;
- poor community infrastructure and weak capacity to deliver services to the most remote areas; and,
- inability to secure the same federal transfer agreements as the provinces, such as the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities, because accepting federal funding requires territorial governments to agree to funding cuts in other sectors.



The Northwest Territories offers the most comprehensive disability support program and has an *Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities*. Last updated in 2008, the action plan focuses on improvements in education, employment, income supports, non-income supports, and housing¹. The NWT government also offers a Voluntary Service Agreement (VSA) to families with disabled children requiring supports, but each VSA contract is only valid for six months at a time before review is required². The Yellowknife Association for Community Living has carried out research on how to implement delivery models developed in the south—such as independent living and respite care—in a northern context as well as how to increase the accessible housing stock to improve residential options³.

The Yukon also started a process towards improving supports in 2012 as a part of the government's *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*⁴. Unfortunately, no progress on delivery of services and supports has been officially reported to date.

[1] Northwest Territories Health and Social Services. (2008). *NWT Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities*. Available

from http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/nwt_action_plan_for_persons_with_disabilities.pdf

[2] Northwest Territories Health and Social Services. (2012). *Voluntary Services: How Can Child and Family Services help my family?* Available online: <http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/voluntary->

[services.pdf](#)

[3] Yellowknife Association for Community Living. (2006). *We All Belong*. Available online at <http://www.ykacl.ca/sites/default/files/We%20All%20Belong.pdf>

[4] Yukon Health and Social Services. (2009). *Social Inclusion & Poverty Reduction Strategy*. Available online at http://www.abetter yukon.ca/files/social_inclusion_strategy.pdf