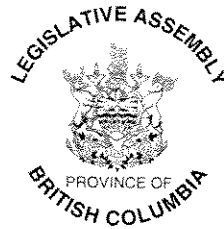


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July 12, 2010

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

BY FAX: 250 356-7292

Dear Minister:

I hope you are well.

Recently, families of people with developmental disabilities told me that they have been blindsided by what appear to be questionable tactics being used by CLBC in their effort to close group homes around the Province. CLBC has sent representatives to communities across the Province to surreptitiously “re-assess” the needs of clients, based on an unknown list of criteria –and without the presence or even knowledge of clients’ closest family members.

It is clear that the re-assessment is part of the Ministry’s overall plan to find any way to reduce the cost of caring for adults with developmental disabilities. Group homes employ trained staff with education and skills required to care for adults with complex health and social needs. For many adults, this kind of home environment provides them with the most opportunities for social inclusion; something our society has recognized is important. Their relatives know that they are getting the professional care they need. Their parents know that the lives of their children will be as independent as possible, and that they will be safe.

Agencies across the Province which provide services to people with developmental disabilities and their families are going to be funded based on CLBC’s newly “assessed need”. Not surprisingly, CLBC has assessed clients’ needs at lower levels resulting in reduced funding to Agencies. If the Agency were to complain, they could jeopardize other contracts; so they are being forced to close homes even when they know that the group home setting is the only good option for many adults.

I am requesting that you remind CLBC exactly what you told the Legislature during Estimates when my colleague Shane Simpson, MLA, was questioning you about “efficiencies” to be found in the Crown Corporation: “We don’t do forced moves, if that’s what the Member is getting to.” The suggestion being made by my colleague was that

families would find themselves in exactly this position; that excuses are being used by CLBC to force the closure of group homes, forcing their family member to move. I understand the unique nature of each individual case; but the manner and speed in which CLBC is forcing Agencies to undertake these closures is causing extreme concern and worry to families affected. It does not make for good practice. Please intervene to ensure that families are not disrespected in this process, and ensure that the needs of the adults with developmental disabilities are a higher priority than short-term cost savings.

Thank you for your concern, and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "N. Simons".

Nicholas Simons, MLA
Powell River – Sunshine Coast