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Ref: 175286

Ernie Baatz  
Community Living Alliance  
c/o Spectrum Society for Community Living  
3231 Kingsway  
Vancouver BC V5R 5K3

Dear Mr. Baatz:

We are writing to update you on two recently announced changes in ministry responsibilities that may be of significance to the persons your organization supports.

On June 23, 2008, the Honourable Gordon Campbell, Premier, announced changes in the provincial Cabinet. Responsibilities for services for children with special needs currently provided by Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) will move back to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). As you know, some services to children were included in the mandate of CLBC when it was established in July 2005.

Over the last three years, government has received significant input from families who believe that the division of responsibility for services to children with special needs and their families is confusing and is not responsive to the needs of families. Families, service providers, and the Representative for Children and Youth have expressed concerns about how current services for children and youth with special needs are structured.

MCFD is committed to enhancing and improving the system of support for children and youth with special needs and their families or caregivers. By placing responsibility for these services with the MCFD, rather than dividing responsibility with CLBC, we expect to make it easier for families to get the right services at the right time for themselves and for their children. In addition, MCFD responsibility for services will better enable integration of services between provincial ministries, including MCFD, Health and Education. MCFD will approach this work in consultation with CLBC in order to ensure minimum disruption and also build on good practice and innovative responses to family's needs that families would want to continue.

Government also recognizes the increased need to coordinate services for vulnerable adults, including those not eligible for CLBC adult services. The new Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD) has been created to better enable government to identify and respond to the needs of this population and provide them with the necessary supports to live as safely and as independently as possible in the community. CLBC services to adults are a critical component of that range of supports and having CLBC report to the MHSD will better enable an integrated approach to services for vulnerable adults.

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MCFD and MHSD will work closely to assist in successfully transitioning youth with special needs to effective adult supports. That will include transitioning to adult community living supports, where eligible.

In the coming weeks, MCFD will be working closely with CLBC to ensure services are not disrupted as responsibilities for children's services transfer to the ministry. Services to individual children and their families will be the focus.

Please contact us if any further clarification regarding these changes is required. Thank you for the ongoing support your organization provides for families with children and youth with special needs and adults with developmental disabilities. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Christensen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tom Christensen  
Minister of Children and  
Family Development

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Coleman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rich Coleman  
Minister of Housing and  
Social Development