



**BC Association
for Community Living**

Supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: GOVERNMENT QUIETLY TURNS ITS BACK ON VULNERABLE YOUTH

New Westminster, B.C., July 23, 2008 - The BC Association for Community Living (BCACL) is deeply concerned by recent changes made by the provincial government to the regulations of the Community Living Authority Act, in regards to I.Q. eligibility requirements. This is the Act and regulations that guide the work of Community Living BC (CLBC), the crown corporation that is responsible for supports and services to people with developmental disabilities in BC.

Faced with a second court case filed by the Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS) on behalf of a youth who did not meet CLBC's eligibility criteria based on I.Q., the provincial government has changed the regulation to enshrine an I.Q. of 70 or below as a criterion for receiving services. The change was made without any community consultation or notice.

This effectively means that those youth with significant social or behavioural issues – in particular young adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or autism who have an I.Q. over 70 and who require individualized support – are left to fend for themselves. Too often this is resulting in youth being forced to leave a safe home and at worst, the criminal justice system becomes the default support system.

Community advocates have been unanimously urging government, across all ministries, to move away from traditional psychological assessment tools that focus on I.Q. and to develop mechanisms that effectively and equitably assess individual needs. Instead of resolving the issue, the government, with the stroke of a pen, has removed any hope of recourse for families who are desperate for services for their young adult children. This is devastating for many families.

“This regressive step by the government is only a further example of the sweeping changes that happen behind closed doors, without any community consultation and at the expense of those most vulnerable,” says Laney Bryenton, BCACL Executive Director. “It is completely unacceptable that vulnerable youth will be denied the services they so desperately need to achieve independence.”

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