



**BC Association
for Community Living**

Supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families

For Immediate Release

February 20, 2007

Balanced Budget 2008 does not adequately fund community living

New Westminster, BC - "How will history remember us? How will our choices stand the test of time?" These were the questions Minister of Finance Carole Taylor posed at the beginning of her Budget speech yesterday, but failed to answer sufficiently for children and youth with special needs, people with developmental disabilities, and their families in need of support.

The BC Association for Community Living (BCACL) acknowledges the government's increased funding toward community living services, but feels the provincial government has not gone far enough in improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities. In this respect, Budget 2008 is far from balanced.

"Budgets are about the choices we make - or fail to make - as a society, and the government has not paid enough attention to those citizens that need extra supports," said Rory Summers, President of BCACL and parent of a young man with developmental disabilities. "The provincial budget for 2008-09, along with accumulating annual surpluses in the billions shows that the government clearly has the means to address these needs but does not have the resolve to do so."

Budget 2008 is a disappointment in that it cannot begin to serve the needs of thousands of children and adults in need of crucial services and supports. BCACL has kept a watch on the budgets for Community Living BC - the provincial authority for providing community living services - and the budgets for the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance. These areas of the budget are particularly crucial for children and youth with special needs, adults with developmental disabilities, and their families.

The substantive increases necessary to address the needs of people with developmental disabilities were just not realized in this budget. Government has acknowledged that the population growth for children with special needs is estimated at 5.5% and that waitlists have plagued the system for years. The 2008 Budget provides for a mere 0.7% increase to services to those vulnerable children and families - it is simply not good enough.

"There are families with young children with special needs and adults with developmental disabilities all over this province who were hoping yesterday's budget might signal a brighter future," said Laney Bryenton, Executive Director, BCACL. "While there is some new money announced in this budget it falls so short of meeting the need that it is difficult to support it.

- more-



“Our provincial government has a responsibility to build safe, supportive communities for all its citizens, including people with developmental disabilities,” Bryenton said. “We will be talking with the Minister about other measures that government might take to alleviate the pressure that families are experiencing.”

For more information, please contact:
Harini Rajagopal, Director of Communications
BC Association for Community Living
hrajagopal@bcacl.org
Tel: 604-777-9100 ext.527