



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Outrage at under-funding of disability-related supports sparks unprecedented united call for action.

Numbers on waitlists become real stories as hundreds participate in online rally.

Vancouver, B.C., February 2 - For the first time in BC, families, people with disabilities and over 100 community service and advocacy organizations, unions and others have come together online to speak out about the significant government under-funding of supports and services that have been forcing children with special needs and adults with developmental disabilities to wait for years to get the help they need.

The ***End Waitlists Now*** campaign, launched in January 2009 by a number of family organizations and the BC Association for Community Living (BCACL), culminated into a three-day-long virtual rally at www.endwaitlists-now.org. Expressing their outrage, frustration and desperation, people from across the province shared stories and sent over 500 emails, hundreds of faxes, and countless telephone messages to both Premier Campbell and government representatives demanding that the 2009 budget address this crisis that is shaming our province.

To launch the rally, families met with their MLA's to demand that the Campbell government pay attention to the thousands of children and youth with special needs and their families, and more than 2000 adults with developmental disabilities, who are languishing on long and unacceptable waitlists. Meetings were held in Prince George, Powell River, Burnaby, Vancouver, Surrey, Esquimalt, and Maple Ridge.

"This government has had every opportunity to help these families," says Rory Summers, BCACL President. "It is unacceptable that infants and toddlers are missing opportunities for optimal growth and development and parents are quitting their jobs and selling their homes, having to pay for supports out of their own pockets. This past weekend has shown us that waitlists are more than numbers. They are real stories of struggle, strength, and hope."

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