



**For Immediate Release**

## **Disability Advocates call on BC Government to Include Pre-1974 Woodlands Residents in Settlement**

**December 17, 2009, New Westminster, B.C.** - The Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL), a national federation of provincial/territorial associations working to advance the inclusion and human rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families, joins the BC Association for Community Living (BCACL) in calling on the Government of BC to do the right thing and recognize the abuse suffered by former residents of the Woodlands institution before August 1, 1974.

While the recently announced settlement agreement approves compensation for approximately 1100 former residents, over 500 former residents will be excluded merely because they lived at Woodlands prior to 1974.

"This settlement agreement is recognition by the BC Government that they are legally and morally responsible for the psychological, physical and sexual abuse experienced by former residents. Additionally it is an important step for former residents of institutions across Canada," says BCACL President Rory Summers. "At the same time, how can we celebrate when hundreds of other survivors are being denied compensation based on what is in reality an arbitrary date?"

"The Canadian Association for Community Living believes the denial of compensation to the people with disabilities that resided in Woodlands prior to 1974 is morally reprehensible," says CACL President Bendina Miller. "The Woodlands review was clear that the abuse was systemic. Whether someone lived there before 1974 or after the abuse people experienced was unjust. The arbitrary exclusion of some 500 people is yet another injustice."

BCACL and CACL stand with the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities as they call on the provincial government to recognize all victims of abuse at Woodlands in the settlement.

"Justice denied anywhere diminishes justice everywhere." - Martin Luther King

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**For more information, contact: Faith Bodnar, Executive Director,  
BC Association for Community Living (604) 764-2591 or [fbodnar@bcacl.org](mailto:fbodnar@bcacl.org)**

Terms of the Settlement Agreement:

<http://www.kleinlyons.com/class/woodlands/settdocs.php>