

The Cerebral Palsy Association of British Columbia

"Knowledge Centre for CP"



For Immediate Release:

Re: New social assistance cuts target people with disabilities

April 7, 2010 - The Cerebral Palsy Association of British Columbia is deeply concerned about recent cuts to social assistance and shelter allowance affecting people with disabilities.

The provincial budget released in March pledged to "enhance support for the vital public services that British Columbians rely on every day." Now, for a potential savings of \$25 million over two years, shelter and supports are being pulled back from some of BC's most vulnerable citizens -- those with low incomes and those living with disabilities.

Minimum shelter allowance, water and nutritional supplements for persons with disabilities all are being affected, along with other reductions to an already-stripped income assistance program.

"Just weeks ago our government was encouraging us to celebrate paralympians for their strength and courage," Craig Langston President, Cerebral Palsy Association of BC, "but the choices being made here clearly don't support social and economic independence for people with disabilities. These cuts are a regressive step for this province. The truer costs of the cuts and the new restrictive language will negatively impact people with disabilities and will have long lasting effects. Their lives will be greatly impeded from acquiring the necessary supports and assistive devices they need to live, work and play in our communities. This is outrageous and unacceptable!"

The cuts were announced through an information bulletin from the Ministry of Housing and Social Development. This is the same Ministry that is encouraging people with disabilities to seek employment and enter the workforce. In reality, these changes will create additional barriers and make it harder for people with disabilities to reach their highest potential and be engaged in their community. Is this another case of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing?

On March 11, 2010, Canada ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Convention signatories recognize the right to independence, equality and self-determination for people with disabilities including "an adequate standard of living and assistance for disability-related needs, as well as assistance with disability-related expenses in case of poverty."

The Cerebral Palsy Association of British Columbia's mission:

- * To raise awareness of Cerebral Palsy in the community;
- * To assist those living with Cerebral Palsy to reach their maximum potential;
- * To work to see those living with Cerebral Palsy realize their place as equals within a diverse society.

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