



Information Bulletin

To All Employees of the Community Living Society

December 7, 2006

Our United Efforts Being Noticed in Victoria

Thank you to all employees who have played such a vital part in our efforts to ensure our elected officials are aware of the immediate need to increase our funding so that we can improve your wages. As a result, we are told that there is now significant interest and awareness of this issue in Victoria. It is important that we all keep the pressure on and continue to make our voices heard. Please read on for new information about how we are working with other agencies and plans for the immediate future.

Respect ALL Community Services Coalition

Since April a group of non-union agencies, including CLS, has been working together to address the issue of fair wages. Respect ALL Community Services was formed and includes agencies such as CLS, Spectrum, L'Arche Greater Vancouver and more than twenty others whose employees are not unionized. The Coalition's immediate goal is to obtain fair and equitable wage increases for you. In the long term we want to see a plan for ongoing wage increases and the implementation of a mechanism by which agencies that are not unionized can negotiate funding increases for wages. We have a website at

www.RespectALL.ca

where you can view the membership list, various correspondence, as well as a Fact Sheet outlining the coalition's purpose.

In summary the Coalition is seeking an equitable four-year compensation plan to include:

- Provision for ongoing pay increases;
- An incentive payment equal to that given to others in the public sector; Funding for Retirement Plans in 2010; and
- Policies that will ensure our agencies and employees are included in all future funding and compensation plans.

In November the Coalition engaged the services of National Communications, a company that specializes in helping organizations with media communication as well as obtaining meetings with government officials. Our strategic communications plan outlines a two-step process: firstly to connect with MLAs and seek meetings with government

officials because we want to work collaboratively with government to redress the situation. In the event that government does not respond, the next step will be for National to assist us to get information into the media to highlight our concerns.

Here is a summary of some excellent progress to date:

- Our members (including many of you) have done a fantastic job in contacting their MLAs to highlight the issue and seek their assistance in communicating the urgency of the issue to Treasury Board members on our behalf. The majority of MLAs have been contacted.
- We had a meeting on November 7, 2006 with the Minister of Children and Family Development, Tom Christensen, through our allies the Federation of Child and Family Services. The Minister indicated that he understood the issue and wanted it addressed as soon as possible, but would need assistance from Treasury Board to provide the funds.
- We had a meeting on November 22, 2006 with Rick Mowles, CEO of Community Living B.C. to give him a first hand account of how the wage and funding disparities are affecting our ability to provide services in communities across B.C. He understands the challenges we are facing due to the disparity in wage rates that causes recruitment and retention issues and the related impacts this has on the quality of services we provide. Rick told us that government has all the information it needs in order to make a decision with regard to increasing our funding.

Next Steps

- As you can see we need to keep the pressure on and we still need you to make your voice heard to both your Liberal MLA and, in particular, those of you whose MLA is also a member of Treasury Board, as it is Treasury Board that approves requests for funds. Included on pages 3 and 4 is a list of all the Liberal MLAs in the Lower Mainland and those that are on Treasury Board are marked with a tick . I ask you all to take the time to write, call, ask for a meeting and generally be assertive in obtaining direct contact with your MLA. If you

have previously spoken to them call them again and ask them what they have done on your behalf with regard to this important issue. Please let me know what the response is.

- The Coalition's key focus is to meet with the Minister of Finance, Carole Taylor, as she is the person in government who leads the decision-making about additional funding for community social services. Together, we are ensuring that she has heard from her caucus colleagues – MLAs – from throughout the Province. We need her to keep hearing that this is an issue that must be resolved now.
- If the provincial government continues to ignore our concerns, the Coalition is prepared to take further steps to increase pressure on them. This will include media exposure and **a day of action in January and we know we can count on your support for that**—more information about this coming soon!

Keeping the pressure on is most important for all of us. Included on page three is a sample letter that might help you to write your own letter. We are told that personalized letters are more effective and so we think it's important that you write a letter from scratch.

I want to acknowledge the amazing patience you have shown in the face of what appears to be total disregard by our elected representatives. I know there are good people in government who want to see this resolved successfully. Be assured that we are doing everything we can to keep this matter front and centre with them and the ministers responsible. Many of you have been actively involved in these actions and I thank you for your efforts. Please don't lose heart. Together we can make a difference so that everyone who does this important work is fairly and equitably recognized and valued and we can continue to deliver high-quality services to vulnerable people in our communities.

Lucie McKiernan
Director of Employee Services

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Sample Letter

Please use these ideas and individualize your own letters.

MLAs

Dear:

As my MLA, I am contacting you (again) to urge you to address the matter of wages and benefits for non-union employees in our sector. I request that you discuss this matter with both Minister Christensen and Minister Taylor.

Since 2001 agencies in Community Living have suffered substantial restructuring to meet budget reduction targets set by the Provincial government. My workload and responsibilities have changed as a result of this restructuring. Like our unionized counterparts, we in non-union agencies have contributed to the economic prosperity of this Province. We had no choice; however, we relied on the good faith of the Liberal Government that our efforts would be recognized in the same way that other public sector workers have been acknowledged for their contributions.

My co-workers and I perform the same work as employees in unionized agencies and are expected to provide the same excellent quality. We deserve the same wages and benefits.

I urge you to ask for immediate resolution of this matter. We have waited patiently since March of this year. Your response and action on my behalf is urgently required.

You can edit a version of the above letter and send it to:

The Honourable Carole Taylor, Minister of Finance

The Honourable Tom Christensen, Minister for Children and Family Development

Victoria Office: Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Liberal MLA Contact Details (on pages 3 and 4) **A represents a Treasury Board Member**

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