

# Community Living Agencies Network

## Inaugural General Meeting

### June 24, 2008

### Notes

#### Welcome

Ernie Baatz welcomed the attendees, outlined the goals for the day and introduced Rick Mowles, Chief Executive Officer of Community Living B.C.

Rick told the group that CLBC is committed to working with CLAN. A summary of his comments follows:

- Currently, CLBC have implemented a new waitlist policy, recognizing that this is one of the key issues that they must address. It will give them better clarity with government on the demand for services.
- CLBC's information management systems are still in development, the goal being to move to electronic versus paper as much as possible. An electronic contract management system will be implemented by the end of this fiscal year.
- Work is underway on contract management. CLBC is looking at fairness in the allocation of resources over the next three years. This will include ensuring that all resources are used well. The contract management initiative includes:
  - Costing:** The goal is to standardize all contracts around a pricing model. Currently this model is being applied to new contracts and those where significant design changes are being made.
  - Unbundling:** They are developing principles around unbundling block funded contracts in order to offer choice to families.
  - Home sharing initiatives:** CLBC wants standards and guidelines to be in place and service monitoring for providers doing home sharing.
- Inclusive communities are very important.
- Confirmation that non-union agencies will receive a funding increase April 1, 2009. No percentage was mentioned.

Questions for Rick:

#### Comment on the Cabinet Shuffle

CLBC was moved from MCFD to the Ministry for Housing and Social Development with a new Minister Rich Coleman. CLBC will now be responsible only for adult services; all services for children will be transitioned back to MCFD. CLBC staff on the children's side will move back to MCFD.

#### What is being done to address waitlists?

There is never enough funding to satisfy all needs in the sector. CLBC is working on an electronic waitlist management system in order to be better informed. There were many people they didn't know about. They will use a priority approach to address those on the list.

#### How can CLAN achieve its objectives when there is a shortfall?

It depends how CLAN organizes and strategizes. The unions receive automatic increases. CLAN needs to position itself to get money from the government. He is very optimistic. It took a lot of effort to include non-union agencies in the budget for 2008 and 2009 but it was done. CLAN has a lot of work to do.

### **Providers are funded by health, MCFD and CLBC – are they working together?**

The new Ministry includes a number of currently health-funded services. The message is about vulnerable adults and this is the strategy behind the recent change. CLBC works hard with health and education. This move will be positive as we'll be on the same team as mental health.

At this point Rick left the meeting.

Ernie read a letter of support for CLAN received from Tom Christensen, Minister for Children and Family Development prior to the cabinet shuffle. A copy of this will be available for members to view on our website at [www.clanbc.ca](http://www.clanbc.ca).

Ernie introduced the Board of CLAN present:

Ernie Baatz, Spectrum Association for Community Living, Chairperson  
Renie D'Aquila, Reach Child and Youth Development Society, Treasurer  
Lucie McKiernan, Community Living Society, Secretary  
Michael Herbus, Willowbrook Lodge, Director  
Linda Vallee, Shekinah Homes Society, Director  
Clint Hames, Pacific Developmental Pathways, Director

Not present:

Linda Perry, Vela Microboard Association, Director

### **First Working Session – Key Concerns/Issues**

Michael Herbus lead the group through an overview of CLAN, who we are, the benefits of joining, and our values and vision. He identified the known urgent issues and the need to act now. The known issues were identified as follows:

- **Non-union wage and benefit/pension funding parity with unionized agencies:** We need some new strategies for bargaining. The inclusion of a pension education session in today's activities will lay the groundwork for us to strategize about what we believe will be the most appropriate pension plan for our employees.
- **Recruitment and retention of qualified support persons:** Wage differentials across sectors (e.g. school system for teacher's aides and health) are a challenge when we train good people and they are stolen. We need to improve the marketing of our job as a good solid option.
- **Downloading by service partners:** There are basic funding issues. Government believes CLBC is adequately funded; who is advocating for more funding? Families cannot get services and have nowhere to go when they need help. There is no funding for children turning nineteen and no planning being done for them. This is a basic human rights issue. People are afraid to complain because of thinly veiled threats that service will be withdrawn.
- **Cost-based Funding:** The goal of CLBC is to create equity among service providers some of whom are funded high and others lower. Standardized formulae will form the budget and everything must fit into this structure. The fear is that this will result in "slotting" where individualization is lost. We need to ensure choice is not lost with a comprehensive disability-related needs catalogue of services.

In summary, Michael stated that we need two things: better funding; and we need to be given the work so that we have the opportunity to demonstrate the quality services we can provide.

Following the break the group brainstormed concerns and issues. The following issues were identified and summarized and are reported from the flip chart notes to give a flavour of the discussions:

- Disability-related needs index to identify services received (or not).
- Disparity between union and non-union funding.
- “Work” support opportunities.
- Equity between sectors.
- Meeting individual’s needs.
- Risks of “standardization” vs. mechanism to determine needs – baselines.
- Wage disparity between sectors (e.g. Community Living and school boards – agencies provide training then lose staff).
- Marketing/communicating value of career development opportunities and benefits.
- Accreditation should lead to parity.
- Family members as advocates – where is their voice?
- Sometimes family members are also service providers.
- Families who also provide services could be referred to family advocacy support for the advocacy part.
- Separate advocacy by families from what agencies might need to advocate for.
- Family advocacy/status needs to be supported.
- Basic funding concern – CLBC is underfunded.
- Need to support the case for increased funding.
- How many plans are being facilitated by CLBC?
- Children turning 19, eligible for services, but not able to access them (not moving up list).
- Human Rights – UN Charter. Valuing citizens with developmental disability.
- From parent/advocate perspective having to re-tell/explain story to many staff over and over again because of turnover.
- Union increases not matched by % increase – base on wage increases.
- Microboards pay union wages to compete.
- Advocacy for those we support and waitlisted individuals without fear of negative repercussions from funders.
- Whose role is advocacy?
- How to access, and know your position on waitlist.

Summary of key areas for discussion at the afternoon session:

- Wages/Benefits Equity
- Downloading of Responsibilities and Advocacy by Families.
- Recruitment/Retention of Employees.
- Cost-based Funding

**Keynote Address – Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond**

Ms. Turpel-Lafond, Representative for Children and Youth, gave an overview of the responsibilities of her office and spoke about her most recent report. CLAN Members are encouraged to go to the Representative's website [www.rcybc.ca](http://www.rcybc.ca) where there is excellent information and access to her reports. Key points from her address:

- The recent cabinet shuffle will have a significant impact on 19 year olds. Concerned about people who receive service to the age of 19 and not beyond. Currently reviewing 400 cases to understand the decisions.
- It's a problem that people are refused services based on a few IQ points.
- Special needs adolescents and kids are a large part of her office, including abuse cases and mental health cases. She looks at how they are doing and how they are supported. This needs significant improvement. Supports for vulnerable young people with disabilities are guided by great vision and need government support to ensure a good life for these children. The period between 19 and 25 yrs is a very challenging time. Many of these people have been in care all their lives.
- Their work is child focused and they support parents in that framework.
- She has outlined a set of deliverables for MCFD and CLBC and this same work will still require to be done following the shuffle.
- She wants to see an integrated approach across Ministries and seamlessness for people turning 19.
- Her most recent work has entailed looking at children since 1986 who have been involved in the criminal justice system.
- She is still monitoring progress from the Hughes review and will report on this.
- She is looking at deaths of newborns/infants and deaths in mental health e.g. suicides.

In answer to some questions from the floor:

**Wages and retention:** her office does monitor and advise on retention issues. There is a regular forum where representatives from key areas of health, education, etc. come together on this type of issue.

**Advocacy:** she advises people they should expect services, and advocacy on the ground is vital to inform and advise. The current system is very complex and often unnavigable and peer support for parents is particularly essential.

**Turning 19:** she has recommended that her office be responsible for people until they are 25 because of the high risk period between 19 and 25. There is currently no independent advocate for vulnerable adults. Fetal alcohol syndrome is a big problem for those turning 19 who often end up in the penal system. It is more expensive to incarcerate than to provide the appropriate supports in a timely manner.

## Pension Education Session

CLAN members are aware that, in 2010, unionized agencies will roll out the Municipal Pension Plan to their employees. Kevin Jeffery's biography was included in the mailout and handout packages. He is a benefits consultant with more than 20 years of senior consulting and operational experience. He was invited to speak to the attendees so that our membership can gain a better understanding of what types of pension plans are available. This will give us a foundation on which to explore what we feel will be in the best interests of our employees and strategize around how to obtain funding for that. A copy of Kevin's overhead presentation is attached. Summary notes:

- The Municipal Pension Plan is a Defined Benefit plan that will see employees contributing approximately 7% of their wages and employers matching this with an approximately 8% contribution. The investments in a defined benefit plan are managed by the investment company with the downside risk lying with the employers. This type of plan is more advantageous for older employees in senior professional positions, as the younger employees fund the plan. These plans are impacted by investment earnings and are expensive to administer. The concern is can our employees afford to invest this amount, and can our agencies afford to commit to this type of plan?

- With a Defined Contribution Plan, the employee manages their investment. This type of plan works like a bank account and is more advantageous for younger mobile employees. Inexpensive to administer. Costs to employees and employers are more easily managed.
- RRSP type plans are not as subject to fluctuations and are easier to manage, the downside being that there is no set investment schedule.
- Association style plans work for a group of organizations that band together as a collective to help employees meet their investment goals. There would be economies of scale, portability between agencies, funding consistency over a number of years through a group voice, and shared governance and oversight.

Kevin recommended that the next steps be to form a working committee/review panel to research the options in more detail, look for areas of collaboration and target funding requirements with a strong business rationale.

## **Afternoon Focus Group Sessions**

### **Wages/Benefits Equity**

Chair:

Lucie McKiernan      [lmckiernan@cls-bc.org](mailto:lmckiernan@cls-bc.org)

#### **Issues:**

- Inequity in and across sectors
  - Cost of living increases
  - Health, education, CLBC
  - Caps on costs – by region including wage by role
- Geographic representation
- No process for bargaining
- Waitlist inequity
  - Competition for same \$\$
  - Not inclusive – winners and losers

#### **Where to Go?**

- Ministries – Health, Education, CLBC/MHSD, MCFD
- MLA's
- Public/Families

#### **Strategies:**

- Increase CLAN membership
- Develop a media strategy
- Collect contract data across membership and with union agencies
- Identify who represents CLAN at the bargaining table
- Develop a communication strategy with CLBC, MCFD, MHSD, Education and Health Ministries.
- Get some forums going with key people from the above
- Advocate via MLA's for a "Mary Ellen" counterpart for adults
- Establish sub-committees for:

Pensions  
Bargaining  
Funding

## **Recruitment and Retention**

Chair:

Michael Herbus      [willowbrookscl@shaw.ca](mailto:willowbrookscl@shaw.ca)

### **Issues:**

- Wages/benefits
- Demographic all areas – worker shortage
- Skills shortage
- Generational change (stepping stone, mobile)
- Strategy for retention – leadership development
- Using education system (talk about community living)

### **Where to go?**

- Own organization
- Funding agencies
- Revisit CSSEA
- Tapping education systems

### **Strategies:**

- Creating culture within organization
- Raise profile
  - Educating others
  - Revisit title
- Focus on wage incentive for developing higher education/skills
- Learn and integrate community
- Training that is portable/flexible

## **Downloading Responsibilities/Costing and Unbundling/Advocacy by Families**

Chair:

Ernie Baatz – [ernie@spectrumsociety.org](mailto:ernie@spectrumsociety.org)

### **Issues:**

- A. Funding
- B. Costing process
- C. Staffing
- D. To be responsive
- E. Being responsive to the individuals

- F. Unbundling
- G. CLBC not respecting choice
- H. Providing opportunities/information/choice in the community

**Where to go?**

- MLA's
- CLBC
- New Minister
- Families – offer resources
- Agencies
- Self advocate groups

**Strategies:**

- A-C/H Develop and present a range – costing process tool; provide a rationale and be transparent with proposed “range”, “costing tool”
- B-G/H Collaborative negotiation – be open to suggestions by CLBC to alternatives suitable to needs
- Innovation – “appreciative enquiry”, talk about what is working (in others places too)
- Advocate this to be legislated
- Keep families informed

At the close of the meeting it was agreed that working focus groups/committees will be formed very soon to continue this work.

Working Group Summary

ITEM	Wages/Benefits	Recruitment/Retention	Costing/Unbundling/ Downloading from CLBC/ Advocacy
Description of issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inequity in and across sectors Cost of living increases Health, education, CLBC Caps on costs – by region including wage by role</li> <li>• Geographic representation</li> <li>• No process for bargaining</li> <li>• Waitlist inequity Competition for same \$\$ Not inclusive – winners and losers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wages/benefits</li> <li>• Demographic all areas – worker shortage</li> <li>• Skills shortage</li> <li>• Generational change (stepping stone, mobile)</li> <li>• Strategy for retention – leadership development</li> <li>• Using education system (talk about community living)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Costing process</li> <li>• Staffing</li> <li>• To be responsive</li> <li>• Being responsive <u>to</u> the individuals</li> <li>• Unbundling</li> <li>• CLBC not respecting choice</li> <li>• Providing opportunities/information/choice in the community</li> </ul>
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase CLAN membership</li> <li>• Develop a media strategy</li> <li>• Collect contract data across membership and with union agencies</li> <li>• Identify who represents CLAN at the bargaining table</li> <li>• Develop a communication strategy with CLBC, MCFD, MHSD, Education and Health Ministries.</li> <li>• Get some forums going with key people from the above</li> <li>• Advocate via MLA’s for a “Mary Ellen” counterpart for adults</li> <li>• Establish sub-committees for: Pensions Bargaining Funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating culture within organization</li> <li>• Raise profile Educating others Revisit title</li> <li>• Focus on wage incentive for developing higher education/skills</li> <li>• Learn and integrate community</li> <li>• Training that is portable/flexible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and present a range – costing process tool; provide a rationale and be transparent with proposed “range”, “costing tool”</li> <li>• Collaborative negotiation – be open to suggestions by CLBC to alternatives suitable to needs</li> <li>• Innovation – “appreciative enquiry”, talk about what <u>is</u> working (in others places too)</li> <li>• Advocate this to be legislated</li> <li>• Keep families informed</li> </ul>