

June 24, 2008

## NEW COMMUNITY SERVICES EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION PUSHES FOR WAGE AND BENEFIT PARITY

**VANCOUVER** - At their inaugural Annual General Meeting, the Community Living Agencies Network (CLAN) released details of plans to negotiate wage and benefit parity for member employees. The group was formed to seek wage and benefit equity with unionized agencies in BC who offer the same services.

CLAN chairperson, Ernie Baatz says, "We only want what is fair. All community service providers, union and non-union, do exactly the same job and should be equally and fairly compensated."

Overall CLAN consists of more than 20 agencies contracted with the BC government to provide essential community, health and social services to people with disabilities around the province. CLAN seeks:

- ❖ Provision of ongoing pay increases equal to unionized pay increases
- ❖ Incentive payments equal to those offered to others in the public sector
- ❖ Funding for member retirement plans in 2010
- ❖ Policies that ensure CLAN agencies and employees are included in all future funding and compensation plans

Baatz says, "We have worked hard to meet and speak to government officials to bring this issue forward, and we have been extremely patient. But we need a solution now. We know there is a way to resolve this challenge and we want to work with government to realize a positive outcome for all parties."

On January 24, 2008, CLBC confirmed that non-union agencies would receive a 1.6% increase to their contracts to address cost pressures. Most agencies have directed this toward employee wages, providing a 2% increase to wages and benefits.

However, this increase does not bring CLAN agencies to par with unionized workers. Wage gaps exist across the board, and are not consistent between agencies. Some agencies are as much as 20% below the rate paid by unionized agencies. There are also discrepancies in the range of benefits paid to employees.

Baatz says, "We are currently developing our negotiation strategy and this year will meet with direct funders from Community Living British Columbia (CLBC), the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and the Ministry of Health (MOH). No commitments have been made to CLAN members for April 2009. Unionized shops, on the other hand, have received a 2% commitment for that date."

### **For more information:**

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