

April 26, 2023

Honourable Rochelle Squires
Minister of Families
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

RE: Resolution EO-04-23

Dear Minister Squires:

At our most recent annual convention, held March 17, 2023, our membership passed the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Manitoba School Boards Association lobby the Government of Manitoba, Department of Families, to enhance funding support for Community Living Associations that serve critical needs across our province.

Each year, Community Living Associations across Manitoba inject millions of dollars into our communities. Every month, purchases of groceries in local stores, purchases of housing supplies locally, as well as fuel and vehicle maintenance involves reliance and services obtained directly from local vendors.

Community Living Associations employ thousands of people and pay property taxes on commercial properties and also for residential properties. This infrastructure is crucial to support their clients, while providing successful transition from secondary school to community for special needs pupils and while also operating meaningful employment and job training for hundreds of youths and adults with intellectual disabilities following graduation from secondary study.

Many Community Living Associations receive funding from the Government of Manitoba, Department of Families, without which they could not operate. Starting in 2012, provincial funding has been inadequate to meet operational needs. On average, wages for workers in the Community Living sector are tied to the minimum wage. The negative impact of this unchanged funding is exacerbated by inflationary increases on essential goods and resources. Of additional concern, recent minimum wage increases and mandatory vacation pay costs resulting from new provincial and federal statutory holidays are not covered, with commensurate increased funding.

The budget that has been received to operate each individual home for Community Living clients has therefore steadily eroded over the past decade. In the coming Fiscal Year, scores of houses will incur significant operating deficits.

While Community Living Associations have increasingly relied on the voluntarism and goodwill of community members, this model is not sustainable. Without an upward revision of funding from the provincial government, Community Living Associations will soon be unable to meet their clients' needs. These clients are youth and adults with intellectual disabilities who are classified under provincial law as "vulnerable persons". They do not, in most cases, find their own "voice" to share their needs and

concerns with Government. Many have families that have spent their entire lives fighting for every bit of help and support they can get. A heartbreaking reality is that these same families too often fear for what will happen when they are not able to advocate for their family, given aging parental care and other family support.

On behalf of our membership, we therefore join with Community Living Associations in issuing a broad appeal for help to make adequate funding for the programs and resources that they offer to vulnerable people. We shall equally join with CLAs in prioritizing this call during the forthcoming provincial elections issue with the intention that this call shall be made a priority across all provincial political parties. therefore entreats the Manitoba Government (Manitoba Families) to support the above resolution, in order to better support those in our community who desperately need enhanced funding support this coming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandy Nemeth
President