



ALBERTA
HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Minister

AR 59400

January 5, 2017

Letter from the Minister of Human Services to Families and Guardians of Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) clients

I have been hearing some concerns about the work my ministry is doing regarding how we contract for services in the PDD program. I want to provide you with an update on this work and address those concerns.

A big part of our work on contracting has been to have all of the current PDD service providers get on a Pre-Qualified Resource (PQR) list, so that all Albertans can see who we contract with for the provision of our services. To get on the PQR list, we had PDD service providers go through a process to assure us they meet ministry qualifications, such as being accredited.

This was a new step for service providers, but it should not have impacted you or the services your family member receives from PDD-funded agencies or through a Family Managed Service Agreement.

A second piece of important work we are doing together with PDD service providers is to develop a new, consistent contract template. We have been discussing this with service provider representatives and with the Alberta Council of Disability Services, since April 2016. We have made good progress in addressing concerns they raised with this new contract. You may have heard about this work. Once again, this work and the new contract template should not impact you or your services now or in the future.

Comments that PDD will be putting services for tender to the lowest bidder are not true. I want to reassure you and to be clear that the ministry has not and will not put your family member's direct services out for bid or tender. Many Albertans with developmental disabilities have received tremendous support from the same service providers for years, and they will be able to continue to receive those supports. We want to help preserve and strengthen these relationships. We recognize that those relationships are critical for the continued well-being and safety of Albertans. At the same time, we will ensure that Albertans receiving PDD supports continue to have choice in selecting the qualified service provider that best meets their needs. This will never change under our government.

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I also want to assure you that our government is committed to listening to and working with families, individuals and the disability community, so we can effectively and respectfully assist Albertans with disabilities to live as independently as possible in our communities.

We heard the disability community clearly when they told us that the PDD Safety Standards and the Supports Intensity Scale brought in by the previous government did not properly uphold the rights and dignity of Albertans with disabilities. We took decisive action to end both of these policies. We are committed to bringing in policies that are respectful and dignifying.

I want to build on the goodwill and spirit of collaboration from the PDD Safety Standards public consultation this past year. More than 2,000 Albertans – including Albertans with disabilities and their families – provided input through town halls and surveys. I want to continue to build trust and support positive relationships. As Minister, I am fully committed to ensuring this occurs. The Consultation Team's full report, *Supporting Safe and Inclusive Lives*, and their recommendations, are available on our website at humanservices.alberta.ca/pddsafetystandards. We are considering all of the recommendations and will work in collaboration with families, individuals and the disability community to promote the safety and inclusion of Albertans with disabilities.

Also, this week, Minister Larivee exempted the Safety Codes regulation.

I will keep you informed about all of these topics as we move forward. If you have any questions, please email HS.CAP@gov.ab.ca. On behalf of Premier Rachel Notley and our colleagues, thank you once again for your support and advocacy for your loved one and other Albertans with disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Irfan Sabir', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Irfan Sabir
Minister