

**BRIEFING NOTE
Department of Community Services**

Event Name or Issue Name: Private Members Bill
Small Options Homes Moratorium Termination Act

KEY MESSAGE:

- The Department introduced a moratorium on the establishment of new small option homes a number of years ago, with the intent to provide opportunity to complete a review of the then current system to ensure that appropriate supports and services were being provided across the province.
- The results of the review provided the Department with the required information to go forward with a number of priority initiatives, most specifically the Community Supports for Adults/Services for Persons with Disabilities Renewal. Work on this project continues with a variety of initiatives underway.

CURRENT SITUATION:

- The Department has responded to the feedback provided during the consultation process of the Community Supports for Adults/Services for Persons with Disabilities Renewal with the introduction of new residential support options and the launch of a review of the continuum of residential services in Nova Scotia.
- A Residential Review is now being completed and a report of the findings will be finalized by April 2007. The Residential Review is a critical component in the identification of the overall needed changes to the residential system, inclusive of small option homes, to ensure quality and sustainable services for individuals with disabilities in Nova Scotia

BACKGROUND:

- Prior to the Provincial/Municipal service exchange, all residential programs were administered through various municipal units across the province, based on individual municipal by-laws, standards and policies. A number of municipal units developed residential settings which were not subject to the requirements of the Homes for Special Care Act. This included the development of small option homes.
- The administrative and financial responsibility for all residential settings serving individuals with disabilities was transferred to the province during the service exchange.
- The Department recognized the need to ensure that individuals with disabilities who were residing in unlicensed settings, specifically small option homes, were receiving appropriate services in safe settings. Assessments were completed for individuals who resided in these settings, across the province.
- Following the review of individual needs the Department initiated an independent review of the Community Based Option system, which included small option homes. The results and report of the review brought forth a number of recommendations. With these results the Community Supports for Adults/Services for Persons with Disabilities Renewal was launched with the release of a Discussion Paper.

- Based on stakeholder input, the Department released a summary of the findings, which included a mixed response related to the range of services that should be available to individuals with disabilities in Nova Scotia. It was clear however, that families and individuals with disabilities wanted to have choices in terms of residential services. In addition, it was evident that there was a need to consider the full continuum of residential services.
- The Department has addressed the responses with the introduction of new residential program options and the initiation of a full review of residential facility based services for persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia.

RECOMMENDATION/ADVICE (if appropriate):

- It is recommended that any further changes to the residential support system, including small option homes, be deferred pending the final report of the Residential Review which will outline the findings and provide recommendations toward an integrated and seamless continuum of residential supports and services for individuals with disabilities in Nova Scotia.

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