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BRIEFING NOTE
Department of Community Services

Services for Persons with Disabilities Wait List for Adults with Disabilities

KEY MESSAGE:

- The Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD) Program continues to be committed to providing Nova Scotians with disabilities with a range of support options across the lifespan.
- A review of the processes involved with waitlist management has been undertaken. As a result of the review a uniform data management system, with a centrally maintained residential wait list, will be developed.
- An increase in program capacity for both residential and non-residential options is being reviewed to alleviate waitlist pressures.

CURRENT SITUATION:

- There are currently 400 Nova Scotians with disabilities on the wait list for both residential and non-residential program options.
- Implementation of the recommendations in the recent review of residential services undertaken by the Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD) Program addresses gaps in the continuum of support across the Departments of Health and Community Services.
- A provincial SPD wait list does not exist. To determine the total number of people waiting for supports at any point in time, manual manipulation of four regional wait lists is required.
- An increase in program capacity for both residential and non-residential options has been proposed to alleviate waitlist pressures.
- As life expectancy increases for individuals with disabilities and long-term care needs, the residential system has become strained beyond capacity.
- Many SPD clients are being supported in the program across the lifespan. Additional residential options are required to support their changing needs.

BACKGROUND:

- As a result of the closing of large institutions, other residential options in communities for persons with disabilities quickly filled. Without increasing SPD Program resources and capacity in the community, long waiting lists for these services ensued.
- A renewal of the SPD Program highlighted the need for a continuum of residential and support options for individuals with disabilities.
- In the SPD Consultation Summary Report, DCS proposed the need for a residential support continuum for persons with disabilities.

- Between November 2006 and April 2007, the SPD Program undertook a full review of residential services. The recommendations from this review are currently being considered as a means of supporting the continuum of residential options.

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