

**Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD) Program Wait List and Placement Pressures**

---

**Issue:** The Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD) program has a considerable wait list for services for those who require access to the program and those already receiving service from the program. The advocacy community is promoting more individual choice for persons with disabilities and additional community capacity for person-focused supports and services.

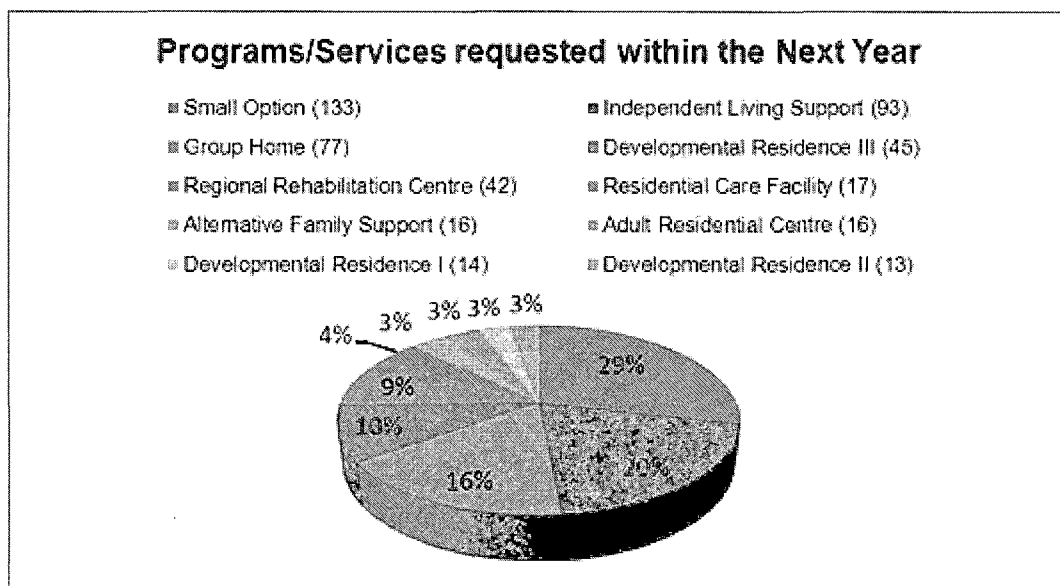
**Government Action:**

- In last December's State of the Province address, the Premier stated the government's commitment to reducing reliance on institutional care and to increasing supports in the home and community.
- The Government of Nova Scotia is embarking on initiatives that will improve the lives of persons with disabilities by working toward person-focused, home and community-based models of supports and services.
- Department of Community Services (DCS) and Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) are working together on a joint project; Continuing Care/Services for Persons with Disabilities (CC/SPD), to coordinate services and ensure better and more responsive supports.
- An internationally recognized expert, Michael Bach, PhD., Managing Director with the Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion in Society (IRIS) has been contracted to support the Government of Nova Scotia in a consultation process in partnership with the community in planning the transformation of supports and services for persons with disabilities. This work will be aligned with the guiding principles and objectives as set forth through the CC/SPD project.

**Key Facts:**

- The SPD Provincial Wait List serves many purposes. It records people's needs and preferences, assists in finding fair and appropriate placements, and it provides information that assists in planning over the upcoming five year period.
- Currently about half of the wait list represents individuals who are requesting or requiring placement within the next twelve months. The remaining individuals on the wait list have been identified for planning purposes, up to five years into the future.
- The Provincial Wait List numbers remain steady. Often times once an individual is placed they are removed from the wait list but placed back on for a different option, location or future preference.
- In order to clarify the needs of the individuals on the SPD wait list, the statistics have been broken down to illustrate the number of people who are currently on the wait list and require immediate placement and those who are currently on the waitlist for planning purposes and may want a different placement/program in the future. The following information was taken from the February 2013 Provincial Wait List.

- There are currently 920 individuals on the Provincial Wait List, 466 have identified the need for a placement/service within the next twelve months:
  - 146 individuals who are currently living at home and receiving support through the Direct Family Support Program who have requested an out of home placement;
  - 184 individuals who are currently waiting for a placement or program/service;
  - 136 individuals who require or are requesting an alternate placement or program within the next twelve months.
- Wait listed programs/services requested within the next twelve months:



- There are currently 246 individuals on the Provincial Wait List who have identified an anticipated need for a placement/service in less than three years.
  - 130 individuals who are currently living at home and receiving support through the Direct Family Support Program who have requested an out of home placement;
  - 68 individuals who require or are requesting an alternate placement or program/service;
  - 48 individuals who are currently waiting for a placement or program/service.
- There are currently 113 individuals on the Provincial Wait List who have identified an anticipated need for a placement/service in under five years;
  - 71 individuals who are currently living at home and receiving support through the Direct Family Support Program (DFS) who have requested an out of home placement;
  - 15 individuals who require or are requesting an alternate placement or program;
  - 27 individuals who are currently waiting for a placement or program/service.

- There are currently 95 individuals on the Provincial Wait List who have identified an anticipated need for a placement/service in over five years or a time frame for placement has not been indicated (2):
  - 52 individuals who are currently living at home and receiving support through the Direct Family Support Program (DFS) who have requested an out of home placement;
  - 26 individuals who are currently waiting for a placement or program/service;
  - 17 individuals who require or are requesting an alternate placement or program.
- SPD is developing a strategic plan to respond to the changing needs and expectations of individuals with disabilities. DCS/SPD requires a budget plan to support strategic investments and address increased capacity beginning in 2014-15.

**Cautionary Note:**

- Advocates and key stakeholders are becoming frustrated by the length of time to address a number of SPD wait list including the wait list and inappropriate placement within the current continuum of services. These groups have high expectations and believe that the IRIS project/strategic plan will address a wide range of issues/concerns.
- A commitment to multi-year incremental funding is required in order to support system changes.

Contact: Ms. Lorna MacPherson, 237-2834 (cell), 424-8263 (office)  
Date: March 11, 2013