

Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD) Program Wait List

Issue: The Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD) Program continues to have a waitlist exceeding 1,000 individuals. This includes 362 individuals receiving no service and 735 individuals receiving supports which do not meet their needs – some over, others under serviced – or are not of their choosing by model of service or location.

Current Situation:

- There are currently a total of 1,099 individuals on the SPD waitlist requiring a residential support option. Of the 1,099 individuals there are:
 - 362 individuals receiving no SPD supports,
 - 458 individuals receiving support in their family home, and
 - 279 individuals receiving other types of residential/community supports.
- Of the 362 individuals on the waitlist with no supports, 66 are in hospital ready for discharge (37 of these individuals require the highest level of support). There is currently no capacity in the SPD system to accommodate these individuals.
- Of the 1,099 individuals on the SPD waitlist, 630 require a residential option within the next year.
- The SPD Transformation is a roadmap to develop a 10-year plan to improve the range of support based on a person-directed approach. This plan will help improve the sustainability of the system by enabling persons with disabilities to remain in their homes connected to their families, friends and neighbors.
- In 2014-2015, the Department will begin to transform the SPD program. This will include:
 - Working with the Department of Health and Wellness to harmonize policies and operations, as well as to better integrate service intake for clients.
 - Revising the Direct Family Support policy, to incorporate a more person-directed, flexible program to support families who are caring for a family member in their home.
 - Implementing family demonstration pilot projects to help families develop their own community-based housing solution.

Background:

- Nova Scotia has the highest rates of disabilities in every major health category and the highest rate of self-reported disability in the country.

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- The pressures for additional residential options and the waitlist demand began as a result of closing large institutions, and the failure to build community capacity.
 - Between 1991 and 2004, more than 500 beds for persons with disabilities with very high needs were closed in Nova Scotia. There were only 40 displaced beds developed to replace these facility based options.
 - The SPD Program has developed new programs and added capacity through Independent Living Support (ILS) and Alternative Family Support (AFS) as a result of an increase in funding for new placements in this fiscal year. However, it is recognized that much more strategic planning and investments are required.
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