

## **Critical Time for Services to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities**

Key decisions being made over the next few months are likely to have a major impact on services for adults with intellectual disabilities. Abilities Manitoba is asking for your help to ensure that these decisions result in a better and more sustainable future.

As is well known, the Province of Manitoba is working toward a balanced budget. As part of this, Manitoba Family Services is under extreme pressure to reduce expenditures. We have been told that the department is working within strict parameters and is required to find ways to provide services differently and more cost effectively.

This is very concerning. The safety, quality of life and very well-being of thousands of Manitobans with intellectual disabilities currently depend on these services. And this service system has become very complex and remains quite fragile.

Abilities Manitoba believes that true sustainability can only responsibly be achieved through a comprehensive and inclusive process. Planning also needs to be evidenced-based with information shared with all affected stakeholder groups.

Without a strong sustainability plan, we believe substantial short-term changes may result in unnecessary risk and reductions to the quality, scope and viability of services currently available to Manitobans with intellectual disabilities.

Abilities Manitoba believes that Manitoba Family Services wants to do what is right and responsible. We have set out five basic steps the Minister can commit to that we believe will achieve a better and more sustainable future.

### **How You Can Help**

Here are two ways you can help:

1. Send an "action card " to the Honourable Kerri Irvin-Ross, Minister of Family Services in support of Abilities Manitoba's call for these five steps.
  - Complete and mail in an "action post card" or
  - Complete the online version of the "action card" at:  
<http://tinyurl.com/nrl8btl>
2. Follow developments on this issue over the next few months by:
  - Keeping in contact with any of Abilities Manitoba member agencies
  - Signing up for Abilities Manitoba's new email update subscribers service at:  
<http://tinyurl.com/l5o36tk>

We are very concerned. But we are also very hopeful that a better and more sustainable future can and will be achieved. Please help us make this a reality.