

January 15, 2025

Dr Michael Prince, Dean (Acting)

via e-mail: mprince@uvic.ca

Human and Social Development
HSD Building, room A102
University of Victoria
3800 Finnerty Road
Victoria, BC V8P 5C2

Dear Dr. Prince,

Please accept the attached documents as the January 15, 2025, Interim Progress Report submission from the Province of Nova Scotia.

Transforming the disability support system in Nova Scotia as part of the Remedy is one of the most significant -- and important -- undertakings in our province's history. Significant in terms of scope and scale, and significant in its impact on the lives of Nova Scotians with disabilities, families and communities.

The Remedy's five-year plan to remedy discrimination against Nova Scotians with disabilities involves many interconnected projects and priorities. Progress in one area is contingent upon progress in the others.

It has taken many hands to get to where we are, and it will be take many more in the years ahead. Success will not be possible without the ongoing support of our many partners.

Behind each of the outcomes in the January 2025 Interim Progress Report is a team of talented and determined people that include persons with disabilities, families and support networks, advocates, service providers, local and international experts, Disability Support Program staff, and partners across government, healthcare and education. They are passionate about their work and committed to the Remedy, going above and beyond and doing everything in their power to make it a reality.

The Interim Progress Report provides an update on the expected status of this year's outcomes as of the end of year two (March 31, 2025), covering each aspect of Appendix A (February to June 2023, Year 1 and Year 2) of the Interim Settlement Agreement, reflecting adjustments or changes to timeframes and targets identified in previous progress reports. It also identifies any area where the Province anticipates it may not be in exact compliance by March 31, 2025 and what steps are being taking to ensure compliance in substance.

Recommendations from the July 2024 Monitor's Report, were appropriate to the Interim Progress Report, are reflected herein, including robust explanations and disclosure, status updates for all items not in exact compliance, and a Key Terms and Acronym Guide (attached). As per the Monitor's recommendation, provincial representatives are scheduled to meet with representatives of the Disability Rights Coalition following the submission of this report.

We are pleased to report that the province continues to make significant forward progress on all six key directions of the Remedy:

- Regional Hubs are staffed with a Regional Hub Manager, LAC/EFAC/IPSC Team Leads, LACs, EFACs and IPSCs, a Regional Closure Specialist, and Community Living Facilitator.
- Our new Individualized Funding (IF) policy is approved and procurement of an Individualized Funding Administrative Backbone is nearing completion.
- We have a plan to establish Allied Health Teams to ensure capacity exists to support Nova Scotians with disabilities in our communities.
- We are working with participants, families and service providers as we end new admissions to ARCs, RRCs and RCFs (effective Jan. 1, 2025), transition residents to community living, and permanently close facilities.
- We have a comprehensive workforce strategy in place and key actions underway to support four key focus areas: awareness and recruitment, learning and development, health and safety, and growth and stability

Workforce is our most significant challenge with recruitment in particular presenting the biggest barrier to compliance with timelines.

Completing all required steps and processes mandated by legislation, collective agreements and policy takes considerable time. On average, it has taken 12 to 14 weeks to complete a recruitment process once the job description and classification are approved. For frontline positions (LAC, IPSC, EFAC), which operate under a collective agreement, Expression of Interest (EOI) applications must be considered first, followed by other Bargaining Unit applications, and finally, external applications. These steps must happen in sequence; applications cannot be evaluated concurrently.

More detailed information is provided in this report, including an overview of requisite the steps and associated timelines within the recruitment process, mitigations and alternate approaches employed to date to fast-track recruitment, and additional strategies being explored going forward.

Advancing the Remedy requires balancing two critical and at times competing imperatives:

1. Maintaining sufficient staffing in the existing system to ensure continued safety and appropriate support for DSP participants who will move over to the new system over the next four years;
2. Recruiting the right people with the right skills in a challenging labour market, and ensuring they have the skills and support to drive the cultural change required to support a human rights approach to disability support over the long-term. This cannot be rushed for the sake of ticking a box.

Leading cultural change is no small task, but we are taking the time to build our teams intentionally and attract qualified candidates who understand not only what we are doing, but also why. It is worth the effort. As part of their training evaluation, we asked new IPSC hires about their most important takeaways; here's what they told us:

- This feels more like real social work, its exciting
- Being present for the small steps which are actually massive
- Looking forward to humbly walking alongside people and getting to know them

- The depth was overwhelming, I've never had training like this before, it has been a game changer. Now I have something to offer people, I'm excited by the opportunities of new relationships
- Found it so personally fulfilling to see impact of others dreaming big

There is much work ahead in 2025 and beyond. It is a privilege to work with so many partners across the province to build a stronger disability support system, more inclusive communities, and a better future for Nova Scotians with disabilities.

Sincerely,



Maria Medioli, CPA, RSW
Executive Director
Disability Support Program
Opportunities and Social Development