
December 27, 2021 - IFCO News Brief

A Message from the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario (IFCO)



Dear Friends and Supporters of IFCO,

This message/news brief reviews a few themes IFCO leaders and others have been talking about over the last many months. It also comes with four important attachments as follows:

- An **UPDATED** draft outline/letter for the Minister of Health about Family Managed Home Care
- *Canadian Disability Benefit Information Sheet*, by Inclusion Canada
- *Direct Funding Can Enhance Home Care for Elders*, an article by John Lord
- *Research Report - Money Follows the Person*, by Seniors for Social Action Ontario

Thoughts as We Approach a New Year . . .

Many of us who have been involved in disability issues over the years - like looking to full inclusion and receiving adequate, flexible, individualized funding & support for people with disabilities - are interested in social justice as a whole. And this is a time of year when many citizens think about others in need – people who are marginalized, or people experiencing discrimination. **What this news brief is bringing forward are social justice issues that have been close to many of our hearts throughout 2021.**

The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario (IFCO) Leadership Group has been sharing in some good discussions with people, families, and allies over the last months. A number of important issues facing people living with disabilities are front and centre. They are listed here for your thought & consideration.

- Ending poverty for people living with disabilities
- Human rights and legal capacity: the importance of having choice and control over one's life
- Access to affordable housing and adequate support funding as adult citizens (without long waits)
- Ending the systemic discrimination of people living with disabilities
- Halting the default to institutionalization of people needing additional supports, especially younger adults living with disabilities, and Seniors who want be supported at home.

As you read through this newsletter you will find articles and information on these themes. You may learn something new, find hope through action and/or just think differently going into the year 2022.

MORE LETTER ACTION IS NEEDED! Re: Family Managed Home Care (FMHC)

Expanding the tent with more letters to Minister of Health, Christine Elliott is needed now!
Why? Because guardianship, stripping someone of all their human rights, can't be taken back!

*Here's who might send letters in round two: 1/ families in need of FMHC, 2/ families who don't need the program but care about the future in Ontario, 3/ friends, neighbours, allies, extended family members, and supporters. **Please see an updated draft letter/outline attached! Share it with others!***

In October 2021 various grassroots groups in Ontario, as well as IFCO, put out a call to send letters to Minister of Health, Christine Elliott about changes needed with Family Managed Home Care (FMHC). **Much appreciation to those who sent letters!** Some families have shared with IFCO that in their response they are being told the Ministry of Health is 'exploring ways to address these concerns'. This is a bit vague with no guarantees at this point. And why a second round of email letters is needed.

We aren't finished yet! Families, whose family members rely on home care, continue to feel incredible pressure and worry. Having to pursue guardianship of their loved one in order to receive self-directed home care support is a big price to pay. What many of us know is that guardianship not only strips our loved ones/friends of their basic human rights, it leaves them more vulnerable into the future.



Also concerning, some families have told IFCO they are worried that the same requirement could make its way to Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) funding like Passport, and other forms of individualized funding. This is another reason to pull together not only as program-users in need of Family Managed Home Care, but others who are not. Please consider sending a letter, whether it is for your family, someone else you know, or just because it is an important human rights issue. Connect with your personal networks. Ask others to send a letter! If we all ask at least one person to send a letter on the cusp of the new year, it could make a difference!

The draft letter/outline attached with this news brief, has been UPDATED with additional ideas by families. This is to assist friends and/or allies with ideas for putting together a letter. It still includes reasons the requirements for guardianship, should be reconsidered. For example: that families are currently managing funding provided by MCCSS, without removing human rights from their loved ones.

In order to have the biggest impact, it will be important that letters are written not only by families who are directly impacted by these rules, but also by individuals and families willing to stand in solidarity with their peers . . . as well as our neighbours, extended family, allies, and supporters. Again, please check out the attached draft letter/outline to Minister of Health, Christine Elliott.

Let's get the word out about the importance of sending email letters to the Minister of Health, the Deputy Minister and Associate Deputy Minister, now, as we move into 2022. Let's support this issue, and let the Minister know that human rights are precious, and that this problem is solvable!

Disability Without Poverty – Have you signed the petition yet?

The mission of the *disability without poverty* movement is to get the **Canadian Disability Benefit** into the hands of people with disabilities as soon as possible. And to have it implemented nationwide without claw backs to people's existing supports and benefits. Learn more about this movement led by people with disabilities supported by families, friends, service providers, allies and organizations. <https://www.disabilitywithoutpoverty.ca/our-movement/>. Also check out *the Canada Disability Benefit Information Sheet* by Inclusion Canada attached with this newsletter.

ABOUT THE PETITION: Read over the House of Commons petition and join other Canadian citizens who have already signed on calling for:
1/ Fast-tracking the design and implementation of the Canada Disability Benefit, AND 2/ Actively and genuinely involving disabled people every step of the way to work alongside the government to make it happen. **The deadline to sign the petition is January 11, 2022!**
For more details and to sign the petition go to this link:
<https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-3656>



DID YOU KNOW? Did you know, that early in November more than 200 influential Canadians called on the federal government to fast track the Canada Disability Benefit? See the full article at the link below:

- ***More Than 200 Influential Canadians Call on the Federal Government to Fast Track the Canada Disability Benefit, People with disabilities make up 41 per cent of our population living in poverty.*** By Art Eggleton, Rabia Khedr, November 2, 2021 - Common Dreams
<https://www.commondreams.org/views/2021/11/02/more-200-influential-canadians-call-federal-government-fast-track-canada-disability?fbclid=IwAR2iEgm4o5pSb7X7dRZ6rqA2zso8MiK60wLe8xjTaWkF355piTq3ElrqOU>

MORE ON POVERTY AND DISABILITY:

- ***The disabled are choosing to die because they can't afford to live***
OPINION - By Madeline, published November 12, 2021, iPolitics
"I am dying, and my death is completely preventable." To read further please click here:
https://ipolitics.ca/2021/11/15/the-disabled-are-choosing-to-die-because-they-cant-afford-to-live/?fbclid=IwAR3kBaM-BBxF5L6OxhFx9Va_7Eu5DfchzFVJeCoj_eLqob8TntsOjGNNYN0

Systemic Discrimination Against People with Disabilities

A Nova Scotia Example - Articles to read

N.S. Court of Appeal rules there is systemic discrimination against people with disabilities, By Staff - The Canadian Press - October 6, 2021



"Nova Scotia's highest court has ruled there is systemic discrimination in the province against people with disabilities who are seeking services and housing in the community.

In a landmark decision issued today, the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal said the provincial government's failure to offer people with disabilities "meaningful" access to housing and care is demonstrated by long wait lists"

To read the full article click here: <https://globalnews.ca/news/8248747/nova-scotia-systemic-discrimination-disabilities-services-housing/>

Discrimination against disabled systemic in Nova Scotia - and those who fought it heroic

OPINION - By Jim Vibert | Oct. 9, 2021 - Saltwire, Atlantic Canada

"It's systemic discrimination, plain and simple. So, said the highest court in the province this week in a detailed 113-page ruling that's a victory for people with intellectual disabilities, their families and their advocates. Now it's up to Nova Scotia's new PC government to fix a system that, effectively, incarcerates people because of their disability and their poverty."

<https://www.saltwire.com/atlantic-canada/opinion/jim-vibert-discrimination-against-disabled-systemic-in-nova-scotia-and-those-who-fought-it-heroic-100643994/>

Update on Nova Scotia Human Rights Case, by People First of Canada

People First of Canada provides a good update in plain language on the Nova Scotia Human Rights Case and the victory for people with disabilities living in that province. It is on the home page of their website. Click the link below, and scroll down the page until you get to the title LATEST PFC NEWS.

<https://www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca/>

Disappointing News. . .

Nova Scotia government to appeal ruling in disabilities discrimination case

Minister stresses province isn't attempting to overturn findings of discrimination or damages awarded

Blair Rhodes · CBC News · Posted: Dec 02, 2021 4:35 PM AT | Last Updated: December 3

https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nova-scotia-government-heading-back-to-court-against-disabilities-group-1.6271353?mc_cid=66108f94d1&mc_eid=37bd1adca3

Thoughts to consider: More and more, out in the public eye, is talk of systemic discrimination regarding people living with disabilities. We are also hearing more and more the use of the term ableism in conversations with friends and allies. To understand more about what ableism means, go to this link: [What is Ableism? \(aoda.ca\)](http://aoda.ca)



What does People First of Canada Says about Legal Capacity?

Legal capacity is a priority for People First of Canada.

From their website: *“People First of Canada believes that all people, regardless of disability, have legal capacity. People have the right to make their own decisions and choices. The decisions and choices made by a person with an intellectual disability need to be honoured in terms of legal capacity and the authority to act. If a person has a support network or decision-making team, this needs to be honoured in terms of legal capacity and the authority to act on behalf of the person.”*

To continue reading go to the following link: [Legal Capacity – People First of Canada](#)

For more on human rights and legal capacity from People First of Canada, click here:

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UNCRPD\) – People First of Canada](#)

Supporting people to have more choice and control over their lives. What IFCO is saying . . .



ABOUT INDIVIDUALIZED FUNDING:

IFCO believes having **adequate individualized funding** is a part of the solution for some of the concerns facing people living with disabilities today. Self-determination and support for decision making are also key. Having individualized funding (which includes direct funding as one form) means that people can organize and purchase supports that are personalized and tailor-made to their lives. It means choosing one’s own supporters, being supported in your own home option with what you want to do and who you want to live with. It also means having reliable and flexible support for home care.

ABOUT INDEPENDENT FACILITATION:

IFCO also believes that having **the OPTION of independent facilitation that is funded, available and is positioned outside the current systems** would be another big part of the solution. Independent facilitation as a role with no strings attached: helps people through a process of strengthening their voice, assists within a family context, helps create a vision for life, supports individuals with making different decisions than the system has to offer, and helps to mediate and broker their supports.

People living with disabilities are already at a disadvantage within difficult and complicated systems of support in Ontario. People with developmental disabilities, especially, need every opportunity to be heard and to build confidence over time. And a skilled independent facilitator assists in this way.

What does it mean when we say outside existing systems and no strings? It means facilitation and planning that is not part of supports provided through direct service providing agencies, and not positioned within central access system bureaucracies or mechanisms. For example: the DSO has a role to ensuring the system runs smoothly with regards to applying and being assessed for supports. It was not designed to support the voice of people, walk with over time, and help make their choices happen. (Two different approaches and roles – one that support the person’s voice and choice (independent facilitation), another designed to support the functioning of the system as a whole (application and assessment). In other words: central access services, like the DSO (and Passport mechanisms), exist for system purposes. Putting facilitation and planning roles in such places is counter productive to the effectiveness of an independent support, like facilitation and planning, with a role to strengthening the person, and their voice and choices - and then helping them achieve their choices/visions/goals.

Seniors for Social Action Ontario (SSAO)

Seniors for Social Action Ontario (SSAO) is an excellent group for IFCO friends and allies to learn more about. **“The mission of this group is to identify alternatives to institutionalization and encourage governments to finance these alternatives with a goal to end institutionalization.”** Here is the link to their home page: <https://www.seniorsactionontario.com/>

The work SSAO is doing offers another example where we, as like-minded citizens, can support each other’s efforts. Their work is relevant today whether you or a loved one in your family need support as an elder now, or would be needing support later! We encourage you to take note of some of the resources referenced here, and see for yourself.

Two very timely papers by SSAO are attached with this newsletter. IFCO supports the direction laid out in these papers.

- **Direct Funding Can Enhance Home Care for Elders,**

By John Lord, December 7, 2021

A quote from this article: “There is growing interest among senior’s advocates for direct individualized funding to be a key component in a transformed elder care system. Directly-funded home care is an option that many elders need and want.”

- **Research Report – Money Follows the Person,** November 18, 2021 – SSAO

A quote from the report: “*Money Follows The Person is a way for people to get back to their homes and communities. But Ontario and Canada do not have this program. Instead public dollars are invested again and again in building even more institutions.*”

Note: You can also go to the SSAO site to read or download either of these papers at this link:

<https://www.seniorsactionontario.com/policyandresearch>



MORE TO EXPLORE: *Essays on Aging in Place: A Guide for Developing Good Policy and Practice, Especially for People Who Have an Intellectual or Developmental Disability*

– a new e-book released by Seniors for Social Action Ontario (SSAO) and Community Living Ontario (CLO). It contains twenty short essays that highlight a path forward to reform elder care and not just for those who have a disability, but for everyone who needs assistance as they age. To read or download the document, click this link:

https://d5bb3c6f-31a3-47ef-a85b-5c06ab03f844.filesusr.com/ugd/c73539_9f7d0232f41b4880a4bbed69b9394b6d.pdf

If you want to get on the SSAO email list, connect by emailing: seniorsactionontario@gmail.com



A SHORT TO-DO-LIST! WE CAN DO THIS!

Things we can do that are outlined in this news brief regarding some of the social justice issues facing us collectively!



- ✓ ***Send a letter to the Minister of Health, Christine Elliott about FMHC – ASAP!***
 - ✓ ***Sign the petition to fast-track the Canada Disability Benefit – by January 11, 2022!***
 - ✓ ***Connect with Seniors for Social Action for Ontario (SSAO) to stay informed***
 - ✓ ***Share this news brief with a friend***
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Meet a few IFCO leaders and volunteers!

The IFCO is pleased to have Kory Earle in a newer role, joining Yona Frishman, as co-chair. Kory has been actively contributing his time and talent with the group over the last 8 months. He facilitated a successful Have Your Say event designed for people with disabilities in October 2021. Kory is getting ready to host a second one early in 2022. The IFCO leadership group includes: Yona Frishman (co-chair), Kory Earle (co-chair), Vici Clarke, Betty Dale, Joyce Balaz, and Michelle Friesen (past co-chair) and communication lead.

Many thanks also to the volunteers with the IFCO Ad Hoc Working Group who have taken on a planning and development role supporting IFCO: Colleen Mitchell (Windsor-Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports), Melodie Cook (Community Living Windsor), Janet Klees (Durham Association for Family Resources and Support), Betty Dale (family leader), Michelle Friesen (family leader), Yona Frishman (Co-chair). Thank you also to Judith McGill, a long time IFCO volunteer, who assisted Kory and team with our first ever Have Your Say Event!

Thank you to the people, families, and allies who have been participating in gatherings and connecting with us over 2021. We thank you ALL for your support of the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario (IFCO). Stay tuned for 2022 and upcoming dates for: another Have Your Say event for people living with disabilities, our next Coffee & Conversation gathering, and other IFCO work as we outline basic self-directed individualized funding features as an option for a good life in Ontario!

