

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Living Toronto Urges Government to Reconsider PACY Plan, Affirm Commitment to Vulnerable Children

(Toronto - November 16, 2018) - Community Living Toronto is concerned that the Government of Ontario has announced the repeal of the *Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007*, the end of the independent Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth (PACY), and the transition of that function to the Ombudsman.

Through his work, the current PACY Mr. Irwin Elman has worked hard on behalf of children and youth with disabilities.

“Vulnerable children and youth deserve a strong, knowledgeable advocate to hold government and service providers accountable. Merging the work with the Ombudsman will dilute the impact and voice of children in Ontario,” said Brad Saunders, CEO of Community Living Toronto. “This community is particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. We have always had a hard-working ally in Mr. Elman and his office.”

While we understand that some of the independent functions of the PACY will continue to be performed by the Ombudsman, we feel that this new structure runs counter to the dedicated oversight and careful attention that vulnerable children throughout our province need. Ontario has a rich history of advocacy for children that stretches back decades. Many improvements to our system have been initiated through the work of the Advocate’s office and that voice. To date, Mr. Elman and his office have been empowered to proactively investigate important issues, such as the use of secure isolation in youth justice facilities, inquests, and experiences in the child welfare system. This work has provided invaluable insights to the government and shined a light on these important issues.

Moreover, the PACY has empowered children and youth to speak with their own voices and tell their difficult stories, and created safe environments for this important work. These additional functions are not possible under the Ombudsman framework.

We believe that Minister Lisa MacLeod will indeed continue to act as a fierce advocate for the children and youth of Ontario, but experience has shown that this community is better served with strong voices independent from government.

We join Mr. Elman in urging the government to reconsider this decision and reaffirm their commitment to vulnerable children.

About Community Living Toronto

Since 1948, Community Living Toronto has been a leader in developing community-based services and supports for people with an intellectual disability and their families. One of the largest organizations of its kind in Canada, Community Living Toronto provides services and support to over 4,000 people and their families across Toronto. Our mission is to change the lives of people with an intellectual disability by giving them a voice, and supporting their choices where they live, learn, work and play.

- 30 -

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