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New System Promises Dignity and Compassion for Intellectual Disability Community

(Toronto - November 22, 2018) - Community Living Toronto is pleased to see a number of proposed reforms to the social assistance system that will improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. Far too many such individuals live in poverty, and these reforms will make a difference in the lives of millions.

The overall move toward a simpler system with fewer rules and less government policing of people's lives is a welcome change from the current system built over successive decades, which has trapped people in the cycle of poverty without improved outcomes.

In particular, we are pleased to see that the province will move toward increasing the annual earnings exemption to \$6000 and a simpler income verification and reporting system that will result in people receiving Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits reporting on their incomes once a year, rather than doing so monthly. These two changes will result in more money in vulnerable peoples' pockets and will remove a significant burden from the many individuals with intellectual disabilities who work at part-time jobs and receive ODSP.

"Too often, individuals with intellectual disabilities get caught in layers of constant reporting and re-application," said Brad Saunders, CEO of Community Living Toronto. "Getting the system out of the pocketbooks of individuals and families will be better for the individuals we support, and let caseworkers focus on helping recipients live happier, healthier, and more independent lives."

Closer alignment with the established federal definition of disability and simplification of health benefits will make it easier for families and individuals to navigate different disability support regimes. With reforms coming, we are very pleased to hear that existing ODSP recipients will be grandfathered into the new system. We look forward to working with Minister MacLeod to reshape social assistance, and ensure that the new definition of disability and the promised health care spending accounts meet the needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

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.

For more information please contact:

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