



## **“Development of Comprehensive Knowledge-based Framework to Addressing the Needs of Canadians with Long-Term Disabilities who are Aging”**

### **PROJECT INFORMATION**

#### **Vision and Purpose**

The main goal of many government programs is meaningful participation in the community. Participation includes affordable accessible housing, accessible community design, caregiver relationships, disability supports, leisure opportunities, volunteering opportunities, access to assistive devices, and access to public transportation. Many older people with disabilities however, are still socially isolated due to issues with accessibility, lack of financial resources, lack of transportation and disability supports, inadequate community policies to accommodate their needs, gender specific issues and negative societal attitudes. A key issue in this dialogue is the issue of eligibility for services and supports in terms of age and ability to work. Another important issue in terms of eligibility is the move from a state of independence (or interdependence) to a state of a higher level of dependence and an increasing need for disability supports and services. For people with disabilities who have had control over their lives and their caregivers, reaching the age of 65 or 70 places them into a different care support model. The question is, how is our health/home care system responding to these needs? Are people with disabilities able to maintain the same level of control and autonomy as they move from one system to another? What happens as a person with a disability moves from an independent living perspective to a system that is set up to deal with more dependence? One of the main issues is comparing and translating the independent living/community living models to current seniors' models of service delivery. Very little attention has been paid to people with long-term disabilities who are aging, including those who live longer due to better medical care, nutrition, societal changes and community care. Aging and Disability has become an international concern. It is known that neither seniors groups and services nor disability groups and services have adequately captured the needs of this group. As persons with disabilities age, they enter a different system (seniors system) of healthcare, disability support, community services and support and income support. They also face challenges with caregiver supports (including aging informal caregivers) and issues of inclusivity and livability of the community. Little is known about how current mechanisms meet the needs and transitions of this growing population, many of whom are used to an independent living model of supports.

#### **Project Goal**

To develop a pilot knowledge-based framework for addressing the needs of aging population of people with disabilities, that will support community living and participation and be based on partnership between community organizations, service providers, researchers and governmental departments.

#### **Project Timeline**

March 15, 2007 to March 31, 2008

## **Implementation Plan**

The project goal will be achieved through CCDS working in partnership with the National and Provincial Advisory Groups, including key groups in **BC, Manitoba and Nova Scotia** to identify needs, gaps and better models of disability support, caregiving support and inclusive communities. Information will be collected through on-line surveys and focus groups and instruments for measuring support services and inclusive communities. This will lead to development of new models of service delivery, community design, and supports. Key Outputs include: a needs and gaps analysis report, development of a cross-country on-going/active network of key stakeholders, an informational website, recommendations to develop supports and inclusive communities and a national forum on aging with a long-term disability. This 12 month strategic investment pilot project will provide an opportunity to widen and build upon our understanding of existing needs (population, organizations and systemic), models of services delivery, policies and determine what the gaps are, and expand our knowledge of inclusive community. This project will significantly contribute towards future planning in transitional issues of disability supports, income and caregivers for persons who are aging with a disability, with some potential recommendations for seniors who are aging into disability.

## **Project Team**

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