



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nothing about us without us

Winnipeg, MB, September 25, 2020 – The government of Manitoba issued a news release this week announcing a new task force and a special advisor. They will separately provide direction on services for Manitobans with intellectual disabilities. The special advisor to the Minister is a person with an intellectual disability.

The Task Force will also be reviewing the Vulnerable Person's Act, along with other policies and practices. The goal is to make sure Manitobans with disabilities "have as much independence and ability to make decisions as possible," as Minister Stefanson said in the news release.

The Task Force has been put together to develop a plan to encourage supported decision making. The plan will also include reducing the use of substitute decision makers for adults with an intellectual disability.

"I commend the government for their movement on this – a review of the Vulnerable Persons Act is long overdue," said Shelley Fletcher, Executive Director for People First of Canada (PFC). "However, if the Minister's intent is to ensure that Manitobans with disabilities "have as much independence and ability to make decisions as possible," then why not start with this Task Force? I question why the special advisor to the Minister is not a full member of the Task Force. I question why the voice of people with intellectual disabilities is not sitting directly at the table with the other Task Force members," said Fletcher.

"No other disability group would stand for this," said Kory Earle, President of PFC. "There would not be a task force on issues affecting any other disability group without representation of people with lived experience. It just wouldn't happen," stated Earle.

"We believe in the fundamental value of 'nothing about us without us.' People with intellectual disabilities must have a full, active and equal seat at the table," said Earle. "For decades we have advocated, even demanded, to be included in decisions that directly affect our lives. Based on the announcement made by the Province of Manitoba this week, our work is far from done."

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People First of Canada is the national voice of people who have been labelled with an intellectual disability. The vision of People First is to see all citizens living equally in the community. For further information contact Shelley Fletcher, Executive Director for People First of Canada Phone: 204-784-7362 or by Email: sfletcher@peoplefirstofcanada.ca Find out more at www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca