#### **MARCH to OCTOBER 2020**

Since the COVID-19 public health emergency was declared in mid-March 2020, ACDS has intensified supports to the Community Disability Service (CDS) sector. Through the Service Provider Partnership Committee (SPPC) and with regular communication with service providers and Alberta Community and Social Services (CSS), ACDS has kept abreast of emerging issues and been a central player influencing the collaborative development of policy responses.

#### **MARCH 2020**

Provincial public health emergency issued. Public health orders guide operations at care sites.

ACDS advocates CSS to enhance direct communication with service providers, allow service delivery and staffing flexibility, recognise COVID costs, and support agencies to interpret health guidelines and access PPE.

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## **Events and Developments**

# **ACDS Activities and Responses**

ACDS begins regular C-19 e-updates to support agencies with information and resources

Pandemic resources are curated on ACDS website

CSS agrees to provide agencies service delivery and staffing flexibility as resources are re-deployed to maintain essential supports

SPPC begins meeting weekly to address emerging C-19 issues and develop solutions

CSS ADM and ACDS CEO begin daily briefings

ACDS stresses the need for direct communication from CSS to service providers

Alberta declares public health emergency

CSS releases direct communication assuring a coordinated CSS and community response to C-19; requests agencies to track C-19 related costs

CMOH Order 03-2020 issued; licensed supportive living and long-term care sites to limit visitors and conduct health screenings. Agencies express concerns about having enough thermometers

CMOH Order 06-2020 issued, with extensive operational protocols for symptom notification and response, distancing, cleaning, and PPE use. Service providers have issues accessing adequate PPE

Virtual biweekly meetings between CSS, regional PDD representatives, and regional service provider councils begin

ACDS CEO speaks to Minister Sawhney about issues facing the sector and advocates for direct and ongoing engagement

ACDS, ALIGN, and ECVO release list of federal and provincial services and benefits, and non-profit resources and initiatives related to C-19

ACDS is a core participant at biweekly meetings between CSS and regional service provider councils



### **APRIL 2020**

Health orders restrict staff movement across care facilities, and there is confusion in how these apply to community disability residences; staffing challenges and access to PPE are exacerbated.

ACDS advocates for CSS to coordinate access to PPE, provide written communication to help clarify health orders, and raises concerns about staffing challenges. Through SPPC, ACDS supports CSS to develop revised C-19 invoicing for greater contract flexibility.

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### **Events and Developments**

Telephone Town Hall with Minister Sawhney, Minister Schulz and Dr. Hinshaw to provide clarity on health guidelines for licensed sites

AHS C-19 Coordinated Response Line is available to support congregate living site operators with symptom reporting, questions or concerns

CMOH 08-2020 issued; movement of staff across sites is restricted and strict guidelines are in place for reporting C-19 outbreak

CMOH Order 09-2020 issued; visits to mandated facilities restricted only to provide essential care or if resident is near death

CMOH Order 10-2020 issued. Part 1 restricts staff to single care facility effective April 23, causing concerns of loss of staff to better-paying facilities. Continuous masking mandated for direct care work causes concerns arising from inadequate PPE supplies. Part 2 updates operational and outbreak standards. Complexity of order causes widespread confusion for disability sector home operators.

CSS responds to ACDS pressure for: (i) increased clarity and communication, by launching weekly Q&A for disability sector based on questions brought to ACDS and regional councils; (ii) PPE supplies, by temporarily coordinating orders via regional PDD offices

CSS releases C-19 invoicing process giving greater contract flexibility and recognising C-19 costs

CMOH Order 12-2020 issued, providing guidelines to support quality of life, testing directives and expanded list of C-19 symptoms

CMOH Order 14-2020 issued, allowing temporary replacement for designated essential visitor and allowing outdoor visits with some restrictions

## **ACDS Activities and Responses**

ACDS e-update clarifies which disability care sites are mandated to follow Order 08-2020, and what CSS recommends for service providers

ACDS CEO presents video message on what ACDS has heard from agencies, current areas of advocacy and emerging issues or concerns

SPPC discusses staffing challenges arising from federal CERB and administrative challenges of navigating changing employment standards

ACDS continues to advocate for access to PPE Covid19@acds.ca email created to efficiently gather service providers' pandemic-related concerns

ACDS compiles resources related to federal support programs and initiatives, and links to funding sources for non-profits

ACDS publishes flowchart to clarify Order 10-2020 for various disability service facility designations

2019 Workforce Survey released to support advocacy for frontline wages

SPPC develops detailed parameters for funding flexibility and invoicing to address C-19 costs



#### **MAY 2020**

Phase 1 of Alberta's reopening begins May 14. Health orders gradually and cautiously relax restrictions.

ACDS advocates for clear guidance from CSS for the reopening of community access programs and prepares a tool to assist service providers develop their reopening plans. ACDS also provides workforce information to the Minister and a statement advocating for wage top-up. A one-pager on workforce data is also released to support sector advocacy.

#### **Events and Developments ACDS Activities and Responses** May ACDS, ALIGN, and ECVO release updated list of federal and provincial services and benefits 1 May ACDS invites photos to showcase innovative methods of providing support during the pandemic 4 ACDS provides Minister Sawhney with requested May information and data on staff retention and wages, 12 along with a statement advocating for wage top-up SPPC Contract Management Working Group May reconvenes to seek feedback on new invoicing 13 process and address areas of concern May ACDS releases 2019 CDS Workforce Infographic to Phase 1 of Alberta's reopening announced 14 support advocacy activities by the sector Alberta Health Services launches a May toll-free Rehabilitation Advice Line, providing advice 19 and strategies to adults with disabilities ACDS publishes a decision-making and planning May tool to assist day programs develop reopening 21 strategies CMOH order 23-2020 issued, increasing allowances May for activities in supportive living and continuing care CET accreditation surveys relaunched, with online sites, while maintaining restrictions to protect staff 25 and virtual options, depending on service provider and resident safety capacity Alberta Health holds three days of webinars to clarify May questions from CMOH 23-2020 27 May SPPC Contract Management Working Group 29 clarifies invoicing template and process

### **JUNE 2020**

Phase 2 of Alberta's reopening begins June 12; public health emergency is lifted June 15. Health guidelines increasing some allowances while restricting other create confusion and conflicting pressures. Reopening of non-essential services creates new staffing deployment issues.

ACDS advocates for CSS to engage with Health to make appropriate adjustments and exemptions to mandatory regulations to reflect differences in risks between sites, and to provide services with information and tools to make reasoned risk assessments in their reopening approach. Invoicing process is clarified and SPPC launches COVID Learnings Working Group to assess responses and identify key learnings from the pandemic.

#### **Events and Developments ACDS Activities and Responses** ACDS informs service providers of tools and June resources to assist with reopening planning, 4 including sharing response strategies being developed in some regions SPPC recommences pre-pandemic conversations June related to PDD sustainability and data sharing, and 10 creates new COVID Learnings Working Group to capture recent learnings June CSS releases relaunch guidance for disability ACDS updates its decision-making and planning service providers tool to incorporate the guidance from CSS June Phase 2 of Alberta's reopening announced 12 ı June Alberta ends state of public emergency 15 New SPPC COVID Learnings Working Group June 18 convenes to examine responses to pandemic, and identify practices to retain or amplify SPPC Contract Management Working Group Alberta Disability Workers Association (ADWA) June continues to meet. ACDS shares feedback launches letter-writing campaign to advocate for at 19 regarding ongoing invoicing challenges and least \$2/hr wage increases for CDS workforce implementation inconsistencies Dr. Hinshaw hosts Town Hall on visitor policy for June supportive living and long-term care facility 23 residents



### **JULY 2020**

Visitation restrictions relax in long-term care facilities and school re-entry plan is announced.

ACDS supports CDS sector relaunch, SPPC resumes discussions on systemic issues, and ACDS submits formal response to Premier's Council on Charities and Civil Society.

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## **Events and Developments**

Minister Sawhney and senior CSS staff consult with academics and researchers to discuss opportunities and challenges in PDD, FSCD, AISH, and Income Supports

Bill 32, the Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, is introduced in the Legislature

CMOH order 29-2020 issued, giving long-term care facilities greater visitation flexibility

Alberta Health releases an updated Q&A for CMOH 23-2020, answering questions on health screenings, testing and isolation

Alberta Education announces schools re-entry plan for September under scenario 1 (near normal operations with health measures in place)

## **ACDS Activities and Responses**

ACDS Director of Strategic Services and Stakeholder Engagement is invited to participate in Minister Sawhney's Disability Advisory Forum

SPPC COVID Learnings Working Group summarizes key learnings and provides recommendations to support governance, flexibility, collaboration, and innovation in the sector

ACDS makes their return to office guidelines publicly available as an example for any organization planning their own return to office

ACDS is invited to participate in Premier's Council on Charities and Civil Society consultation on what Alberta's civil sociey needs to to guide recovery

ACDS submits formal response to Premier's Council on Charities and Civil Society consultation, advocating for: sustainable and flexible funding; reduced regulatory burdens; supports to enhance overall organizational capacity (not just service delivery); better understanding of cross-system impacts; and stronger collaboration mechanisms

### **AUGUST 2020**

Masking bylaws are implemented in various communities across the province. Increasing numbers of staff and individuals begin testing positive for C-19. Staff coverage costs start exceeding budgeted amounts; some staff express reluctance to work in homes where positive C-19 cases are reported.

ACDS advocates for clear guidance from AHS, and for CSS to allow unbudgeted coverage costs to be claimed under C-19 expenses. CSS invites input from ACDS on developing a collaborative process to address sustainability challenges through system transformation.

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### **Events and Developments**

Mandatory mask bylaws are put into place in multiple cities, including Calgary and Edmonton

CSS approaches ACDS for input on developing a collaborative process to address systemic challenges and sustainability issues

At SPPC, service providers express concerns about staffing and challenges related to unbudgeted costs as communities open up and more staff and individuals test positive for C-19

# **ACDS Activities and Responses**

ACDS advocates for engagement that includes clear parameters, systems design expertise, and representation from community disability service providers, families and individuals

ACDS Government Relations Committee supports the development of a new engagement body for ACDS to connect with families of individuals receving community based services

ACDS advocates for clear and consistent guidance from AHS, streamlined reporting process for positive cases, and for CSS to cover unbudgeted expenses as part of C-19 costs

Early to mid August

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# September 2020

Schools reopen in Alberta, a broader range of PDD data becomes publicly available, some public health restrictions are relaxed for care facilities, and new federal programs are announced.

ACDS supports the sector with information on federal programs, and provides input to CSS on distribution of federal wage top-ups if these were to become available to workers in the CDS sector.

PDD and FSCD program data is updated to the end of June 2020 and made available on the Alberta Government's Open Data Portal

Schools begin reopening across Alberta, with masking requirements in place

CMOH order 32-2020 is put into effect, lessening quarantine requirements upon admission to long-term care facilities, re-allowing volunteer access, and allowing exemptions to single-site regulations for specific professions and roles

Asymptomatic individuals are no longer able to access C-19 testing in Alberta

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CSS requests ACDS for input on the distribution of potential federal wage top-ups for essential workers; ACDS advocates for a flexible process that is not prescriptive or burdensome, which allows employers to use their own criteria for distribution in their agencies



### October 2020

As federal CERB comes to an end, workers are transitioned to an expanded version of Employment Insurance and a new sickness and caregiving benefit (CRSB and CRCB). C-19 cases begin to rise in mid-October, resulting in a 15-person limit on social gatherings in Calgary and Edmonton.

ACDS resumes committees that had been paused due to C-19, and launches the #QualityCDS campaign to celebrate and share facts about the CDS sector. A report detailing impacts and learnings from the first 6 months of C-19 is produced to help inform improvements to PDD program sustainability and supports.

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### **Events and Developments**

### **ACDS Activities and Responses**

ACDS Government Relations Committee and ACDS Human Resources Coordinating Committee resume work

The SPPC continues to meet and discuss COVID-related issues and broader PDD program needs, while the Contract Working Group resumes to address outstanding invoicing issues

ACDS summarizes the list of new federal benefits and grants relevant to the CDS sector

Bill C-4 is passed, providing federal benefits to workers quarantining due to C-19 (CRSB) or staying home to care for dependants (CRCB)

CERB benefit ends, and is replaced by an expanded version of Employment Insurance

An updated screening tool is provided to longterm care sites aligning screening with other sectors to focus on limiting entrance of individuals with a high risk of transmitting C-19

ACDS launches the #QualityCDS campaign to celebrate the hard work in the sector during the pandemic, and to share key facts about the sector and its workforce

ACDS Fall Webinar Series provides 5 days of professional development for frontline staff in topics including mental health and trauma, intercultural competence, dementia care, gender and sexual diversity in the disability community, and care in the time of C-19

ACDS releases a statement to provide facts on community-based service delivery in Alberta

Following record numbers of C-19, a 15person limit is placed on indoor and outdoor social gatherings in Calgary and Edmonton

Dr. Hinshaw writes a letter to supportive living and long-term care operators in Edmonton and Calgary, recommending visitor restrictions

ACDS publishes a paper highlighting the impacts on the CDS sector in the first 6 months of C-19 and providing recommendations for sector recovery and growth