



A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ABOUT THE FUTURE

A Discussion Guide For Service Providers and Families, June 2011

Better Outcomes. Improved Contracting. Demonstrated Results.



CONTEXT: THE ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

In June of 2010, the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports requested a review of the administrative costs of the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program.

The purpose of the review was to understand how effectively administration funds were being used in carrying out the PDD program. The mission of the PDD program is to promote independence and inclusion in a way that responds to the unique needs of each adult with developmental disabilities. While the review found that the PDD program is generally effective in meeting that mission province-wide, we must ensure that the program is always focusing on improving the efficiency of its administrative processes while meeting the distinct needs of individuals as effectively as possible.

The independent review of administrative processes, carried out by KPMG, an external consultant, included surveys to a large sample of stakeholders, focus groups, interviews; analysis of financial and performance data; and comparisons with similar programs in other provinces and countries.

The review revealed areas for improvement in the administration of the PDD program and made a series of recommendations that the Government has accepted to improve administrative efficiency within the PDD program:

1. Adopt a “one organization” approach, in which the overall organization operates cohesively and consistently.
2. Improve the efficiency of the service provider network by introducing a new contracting process.
3. Implement additional resources to support and enhance the use of the family managed services option.
4. Introduce common processes and IT systems.

TALKING ABOUT CONTRACTING

Of the four recommendations, we’re here to discuss and obtain your feedback on an improved contracting strategy to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the service provider network.

The Minister and the boards cannot implement changes without substantial input from families, guardians and service providers: those who are most affected by the contracting process.

A new contracting process might have the following characteristics:

1. A clear definition of the results expected from the service provided, based on the individual’s needs.
2. Competitive bidding for service provider contracts to ensure the best possible services and best value.
3. A service delivery model that allows for cooperation between service providers. It will be important to build this service network together, with an aim to streamlining administrative processes and making a range of services easier to access.
4. Key performance measures and monitoring and reporting expectations for all service contracts.

Improving the service delivery model is not meant to overhaul how individual services are carried out. Service providers of all functions and sizes will remain an **important part of service delivery**.

This focus group conversation is in three parts:

- Getting better at being outcomes-based
- Developing the best kind of contracting process to deliver on outcomes
- Looking at performance measurement and communications about performance.

A contract is the tool that brings together a range of services, supports and commitments into a coherent whole for improved personal outcomes. Effective contracting is one of the ways that PDD achieves improved outcomes for individuals.

CONTRACTING PROCESS REVIEW TIMELINE

Changes to the contracting process will be **methodical and staged**. Individuals, families and service providers should be assured of continuity of service, and no abrupt changes to the process. As you can see from this timeline, there will be time to test any proposed changes and introduce them gradually into the regions.

Action	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Release KPMG report ▪ Minister’s letter to community boards with written instructions 	May 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus groups on contracting processes with families and service providers ▪ Separate sessions with individuals and self-advocates 	June 2011 Locations: St. Paul, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, Calgary, Edmonton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop common processes ▪ Improve access to Family Managed Services ▪ IT system development 	Spring 2011 – ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement pilot projects to test alternate contracting approach 	January, 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of contracting processes 	April 2013

YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Being Outcomes-Based

The most important person in the PDD system is **the individual needing supports**. Their quality of life, their ability to participate in the community and their satisfaction with the supports they receive are central to a successful system.

Lots of work is happening across the province on defining personal outcomes, such as social inclusion, emotional well-being, personal development and self-determination.

Through these conversations, we need to look at how being outcomes-based can be supported through effective contracting.

When considering how the system can be improved, please think holistically about contracting for positive outcomes for **all** individuals receiving service through the PDD network. Try to think about the big picture as well as your own experiences.

1. How can contracts enable an outcomes-based focus for individuals?

2. What’s getting in the way of contracts contributing to positive outcomes for individuals?

New Contracting Processes

If contracts are one way to deliver positive outcomes, we have a responsibility to design the best possible contracting process to support individuals. Let’s talk about improving contracting by considering:

- Contracts that have a clear definition of results expected from the supports.

- The advantages or disadvantages of competitive bidding for contracts.
- A service delivery approach that allows for more cooperation among service providers.
- Contracting processes that define key performance measures and reporting expectations.

1. Given this list, what's most important to you in an effective contracting process?

2. What is important to avoid?

3. What do you think are the advantages/disadvantages of competitive bidding?

4. What do you think about contracts that allow for cooperation among service providers?

Measuring Performance

If PDD as a funder, and service providers within the PDD network are to become strong examples of accountability and performance-based organizations, they must develop the capacity to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of their operations.

Effective organizations are committed to ongoing performance measurement in order to determine how well they are doing, if they are meeting their objectives and if the people they serve are satisfied. Such performance-based organizations ask questions like:

- How are we doing?
- Have we been meeting your family's needs?
- What else could we be doing for you that would make our service and your life more effective?

In addition to asking questions, performance-based organizations share their findings, strive for continuous improvement, and shift their service provision based on ongoing feedback from their customers and clients – in this case individuals and their families.

Considerable work has already been done on defining personal outcomes and performance measurement within the PDD system. Your answers to the following questions will assist in shaping that work and ensuring that it reflects the values, commitment to excellence and aspirations of families and service providers.

1. What aspects of service provider performance should be evaluated? (e.g. Focus on outcomes? Flexibility? Service timelines? Satisfaction of individuals and families? Cost effectiveness?)

2. What kind of communication about performance do you expect from service providers? (e.g. Release of performance results, similar to the health system?)

3. What will need to change about the PDD system and relationships within the system in order to evolve into a performance-based organization?

CONCLUSION

This guide is to help you get ready for the focus group conversations with individuals, families and service providers that we will be having across the province in June. We will be coming to each region to get your answers to these questions and your input into building a system that will:

- ✓ Reduce administrative costs
- ✓ Use money in the most effective way
- ✓ Build consistency across the province
- ✓ And most importantly – focus attention on achieving positive outcomes for the individuals who are supported by the PDD system.

The focus groups are about listening to your input and using that input to develop and implement pilot projects to test a renewed contracting approach. This will all happen gradually and in a planned way. No system-wide changes will take place until 2013.

It is important for the individuals, families and service providers that have participated to see the collected input from these focus groups. At the conclusion of our conversations, the Ministry will develop a summary report that will be available on the Ministry's website.

As well, if you wish to have further input after the focus group sessions, please let us know by e-mailing: pddfocustgroups@gov.ab.ca

We look forward to talking with you – and to meeting you in your community.