



The Alberta PDD Review

PDD stands for Persons with Developmental Disabilities and is a very important organization in Alberta. This organization funds programs and services for adults with developmental disabilities within Alberta. The goal of PDD is to help these adults live as independently as they can.

Due to feedback received during the review of Safety Standards, the NDP government has decided to review the PDD program. According to the Alberta Minister's Office of Community and Social Services: "The purpose of the review is to find ways to improve supports and make life better for Albertans with disabilities." The Office of the Minister set out a list of areas of focus for the review of the PDD program.

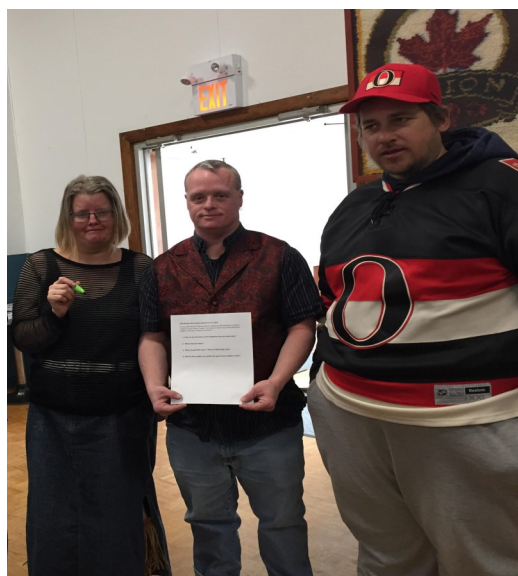
These areas include:

- getting help when you need it
- planning for future and life transitions
- Staff
- engaging the disability community

The PDD review will also seek to build on the improvements made since 2015.

These improvements include:

- an increase in funding by almost \$150 million
- ending the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS)
- repealing PDD Safety Standards



(SRSAN members brainstorm feedback for the PDD review, from left to right: Linda McDonald, Bill Blair, and Chuck McDonald)

The Office of Minister Sabir has appointed a community-led panel made up of self-advocates, workers, agencies, and family members. This diverse panel has met in different cities and towns across the province to discuss programming changes.

Individuals that receive services from PDD, caregivers, disability workers, service providers, and advocacy group representatives were welcome to attend these sessions. Allies from the community were also welcome to attend at certain times. The following locations were visited by the PDD review council: St. Paul, Grand Prairie, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Calgary, and Edmonton.

Some members of our news crew attended one of the Lethbridge sessions. Like many of the sessions it was organized mainly by table conversations in which attendees were able to ask questions, share experiences, and give feedback. (Continued on next page...)

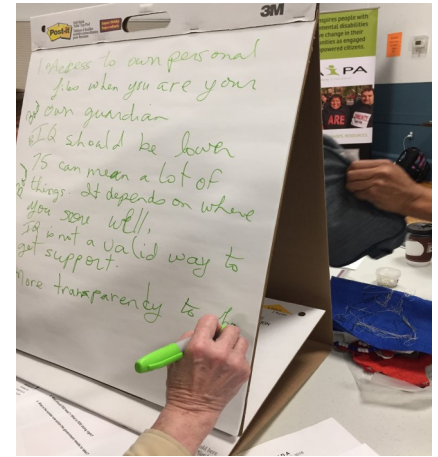
The Alberta PDD Review Continued...

The moderators were able to collect the information given to them on post it notes and sort them into appropriate categories along the wall. This way all of the information collected could be seen by everyone at the review session. Some of the categories for the post its included improvements, complaints, and funding for the PDD program.

In the November SRSAN meeting members had their own round table discussions in order to provide feedback for the PDD review team. The information collected from these discussions will be sent directly to the PDD review team.

If you were unable to attend the review panel there were other ways to share feedback with the PDD review panel. Written feedback and, art or video submissions could be emailed to the review team.

The PDD review was long anticipated by self-advocates and other community members. It will be exciting to see what changes are made due to the feedback given by those effected by PDD.



(SRSAN members record feedback for PDD review)

The AACT Summit 2018

Albertans Advocating for Change Together is a network of self-advocates who work together in a team to inform Albertans of the activities and work of self-advocates across the province. By connecting self-advocates and allies, AACT helps to promote change and provides support for self-advocates to live fulfilling lives.

On October 1st-3rd of 2018 during the first big snow storm of the season, the AACT summit was held at Deer Valley Meadows Camp outside of Red Deer, Alberta. Self-advocates from across the province were invited to stay in cabins, enjoy wonderful food, and attend sessions. They also participated in multiple activities such as human foosball, film viewings, and a dance.



**Albertans
Advocating for
Change
Together**

(AACT official logo)

One of the highlights of this experience was the chance for self-advocates to overcome their fears and reach new heights on a climbing wall. Accomplishing this had a lot to do with listening to guest speakers Kathy Archer, Cory Johnson, Linda McDonald, and Lorri Sprlak talk about the importance of believing in yourself and having confidence to overcome life's many obstacles. (Continued on the next page...)

The AACT Summit 2018 Continued...

A climbing wall is not just fun and games. Debbie Murray, one of the organizers for the 5th Self-Advocacy Summit, said that “facing fears and challenges helps motivate people to face other fears like speaking up and standing up for themselves. That’s what self-advocacy is all about; having the courage and the ability to speak up for your rights and make life better.”

The theme of this year’s summit was “Listen. Learn. Take Action!” This was incredibly applicable as along with about 125 self-advocates and support staff in attendance, there were also attendees from AISH, PDD, The Disability Advocates Office, The PDD review team, and The Premiere’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. This gave self-advocates the ability to speak directly to the people who are able to make changes.

Many conference attendees were especially excited about the attendance of PDD and the review team. Self-advocates had the opportunity to meet with the newly appointed PDD review team and to give their feedback for the program over group sessions. This group of self-advocates was the first party to be able to meet with the PDD team. Meeting the newly appointed team was a very positive experience for self-advocates as first opportunities are typically given to service providers and families.



(After listening to guest speakers talk about building confidence some Summit attendees braved the climbing wall.)



(Self-advocates attend the AACT Summit, from left to right: Shawna Howarth, Melody Scout, and Linda McDonald)



(Snowfall at Deer Meadows Camp)

Marijuana Safety

With the increased use of cannabis in public spaces, members of the newsletter crew wanted to learn more about marijuana safety. We contacted Nick Flood (Regional Manager of Canadian Cannabis Clinics) for an interview. Nick agreed that it is important to make sure that communities are educated in this regard, especially due to the legalization of cannabis.



What are the dangers of marijuana?

Nick: I'd like to start by saying that Medical Cannabis or (Marijuana) is medicine. Like any medicine or recreational drug (a drug taken for fun), specific guidelines and knowledge of its use should be followed.

Like any controlled substance, consuming too much cannabis can cause toxic effects (can cause harm). If cannabis is combined with other drugs, the risk can increase as well.

If someone is under the influence of cannabis that contains THC (a chemical that causes effects on the brain), they should not operate a motor vehicle as it will impair judgement and slow their reaction times.

The key to responsibly using cannabis is education - knowing recommended consumption amounts, understanding the effects of different strains (types), learning how different methods of consumption will impact the effects etc. Responsible cannabis use is safer cannabis use.

What are the potential benefits of marijuana? Why do people use it?

Nick: There are many benefits and reasons why people consume cannabis. Some consume for recreational (for fun) or therapeutic purposes, while others use it for medical purposes to help manage their symptoms. In our medical clinics we see patients use it for pain management, insomnia, mental health, MS, epilepsy, etc. With so many dangers associated with opiates (examples of *opiates* include heroin, morphine and codeine), a lot of people visit our clinics to transition from using an opiate to cannabis so they can continue to manage their symptoms with less side effects.

How does second-hand smoke effect others?

Nick: Because ingesting smoke in any form is a carcinogen (a substance that can cause cancer), we recommend our patients use a vaporizer to consume cannabis. A vaporizer enables people to consume either dry cannabis or oils without combusting (burning) plant matter. It is a much safer way to consume cannabis than smoking it. Oils are also a commonly used alternative.

If people are smoking cannabis, second hand smoke will affect others. While someone would not likely become impaired through second hand smoke, it would enter their system. This is an area that is currently being researched further. (Continued on next page...)

Marijuana Safety Continued...

What do self-advocates need to know to be safe if they choose to use it?

Nick: Education is key. Having a grasp of strain management, which is the understanding how specific cannabinoids (medical substance found in cannabis) affect us. Example, CBD is non intoxicating, while THC is. Some strains (sativa) are uplifting and provide a more cerebral experience, while others are more calming and physiological.



(Nick Flood: Regional Manager - Western Canada of Canadian Cannabis Clinics)

The President's Award

On Monday September 24th at the Annual General Meeting for the Rehabilitation Society of Southwestern Alberta, SRSAN was awarded the President's Award. This award is presented annually to individuals, groups or organizations that have shown continuous support for the individuals served by the Rehabilitation Society.

For this honour SRSAN executive members Scott Nickel, Randy Chandler, and Shawna Howarth received a plaque and a piece of art created by self advocate Steven T on behalf of SRSAN as part of the President's Award.



(From left to right: Steven T, Randy Chandler, Shawna Howarth, Scott Nickel, and Jean Greer)

The Rehabilitation Society said that SRSAN received the award because of their excellent work advocating for persons with developmental disabilities. The Rehabilitation society was specifically interested in SRSAN's work in speaking up against the SIS and Safety Standards and the proactive and positive relationship developed with the Minister of Community & Social Services.

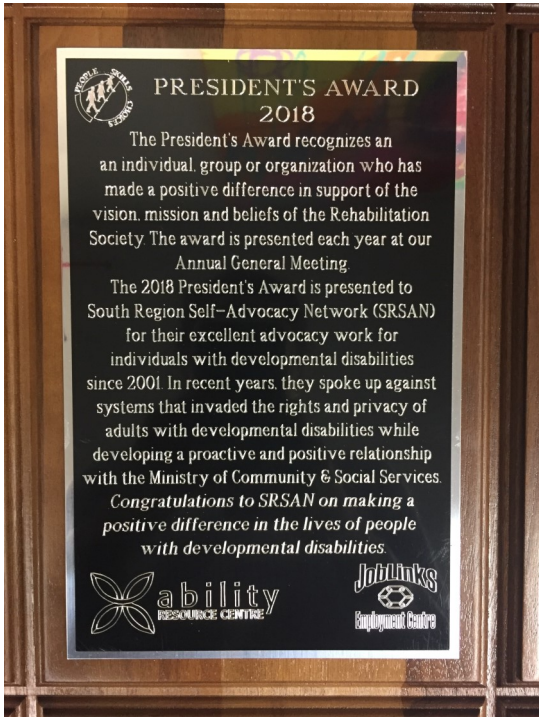
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January/February

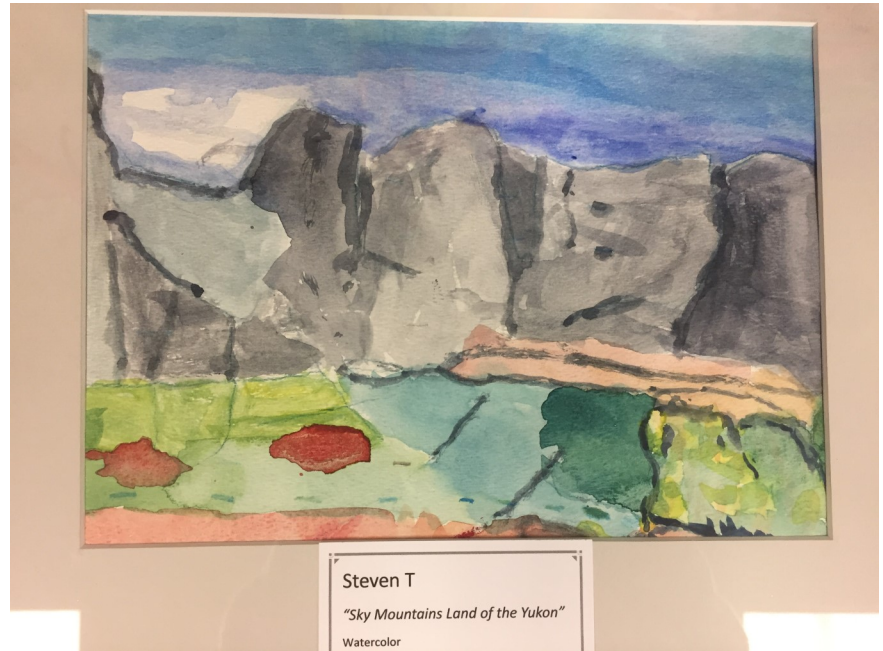


The President's Award Continued...

Members were very proud to be recognized for their hard work. What a great note to end the year on!



(The President's Award Plaque presented to SRSAN)



(Steven T created a watercolor painting entitled "Sky Mountains Land of the Yukon." for the recipient of the award.)

Meet your Newsletter Crew!

Your bi-monthly newsletter is brought to you by the newsletter crew. This group is made up of members of SRSAN who meet once a week to bring you the latest in local news for self-advocates. If you are a member of SRSAN and would like to help create the next newsletter please contact the SAIPA office by calling 403-320-1515 or by emailing alexandra.long@saipa.info

This newsletter was brought to you by:

Randy Chandler

Kassie Heine

Shannon Kehler

Scott Nickel

Danielle Peterson

Tiffany Preete

Melody Scout

January/February



Upcoming Events!

SAIPA Workshops

-Abuse Prevention

January 31st from 1pm-4pm

-Boards, Committees, and Meetings

February 5th, 12th, 19th from 1pm-3:30pm

-Self-Advocacy

February 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th from
1pm-3:30pm



SRSAN

-SRSAN Meeting

Medicine Hat 10:30am-2pm



Community Events

Dec. 13th-Jan. 26th (statutory holidays excluded)- **Nikka Yuko Winter Lights Festival** (Japanese Gardens) 6pm-9pm

Jan. 4th- **UofL Music Conservatory** (CASA) 12:15pm-1pm

Jan 14th-15th- **Banff Mountain Film Festival** (Medicine Hat Public Library)

Jan 16th- **Author Talk-C.S. Hunt** (Lethbridge Public Library) 7pm-9pm

Jan 19th- **Alberta Food and Beverage Expo** (Lethbridge Exhibition Main and South Pavilions)

Jan. 31st- **Galt Museum Exhibit Grand Opening** (Galt Museum)



Upcoming SAIPA Workshop Information

Abuse Prevention Workshop



This workshop is FREE to take! To enroll please contact SAIPA:
403-320-1515
alexandra.long@saipa.info

What is it?

-This training gives learners the skills to recognize and report abuse and is intended for individuals receiving PDD supports and their guardians

What will I learn?

- Learn about different types of abuse
- Receive information on how to stop abuse
- Learn the steps to take if abuse happens

When is it?

-Thursday, January 31st, 2019 from 1-4pm

SAIPA

Check SAIPA's Facebook and Twitter (SAIPA1986) for more information on upcoming workshops

The Ripple Newsletter raises awareness about SRSAN, self-advocacy and inclusion. We welcome comments, questions and ideas! If you have something to share with us, contact Alexandra Long at 403-320-1515 or alexandra.long@saipa.onfo