



Disability Rights Coalition of Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia Disability Rights are Human Rights

Web: www.disabilityrightscoalitionns.ca

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“The Province Fails to Properly Implement the Human Rights Remedy in Year 1”

The Disability Rights Coalition is expressing profound disappointment with the Province’s progress in implementing a Human Rights Board of Inquiry Order to Remedy the systemic discrimination against persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia.

The Remedy is a legally binding Order from the NS Human Rights Board of Inquiry which has set out a step-by-step set of obligations over the next five years to ‘remedy’ the systemic discrimination by the Province against persons with disabilities in the provision of social services and supports.

In [submissions filed with the independent Expert Monitor](#) charged with assessing the Province’s compliance with the legally binding Remedy Order, the DRC pointed out that in Year 1 of the Remedy, the Province had contravened that Order by failing to:

- Implement a firm ‘no new admissions’ policy on institutionalizing persons with disabilities rather than providing supports to live in communities as Ordered. This was to have been done by March 31st. The Province is now claiming this this won’t happen until 2025 for larger institutions and not until 2026 for smaller institutions. As a result, people with disabilities will continue to be harmfully institutionalized in Nova Scotia—possibly for years.
- Offer 25 additional spaces to persons under age 65 who are currently living in long term care homes and who want to live in community.
- In outlining its steps for implementing the Remedy, the Province has failed to set out the measures it will take to ensure that the Mi’kmaq people with disabilities living in Provincial institutions will be able to live with supports in their communities when those institutions close.
- None of the 25 front-line Local Area Coordinators (LACs) who will be working closely with persons with disabilities to assist in getting supports and services organized and who were supposed to be hired by now— have yet been recruited.
- The DRC has highlighted concerns regarding the Province’s plans as to who will be even eligible for supports under the Remedy.
- There are widespread delays in the Province’s implementation of its other legal responsibilities under the Board of Inquiry’s Remedy Order.

All of this is against a backdrop where, last November, Premier Houston delivered an [historic apology](#) to persons with disabilities for decades of systemic discrimination they have suffered,

including institutionalization, placements far from family and friends and years long wait lists for basic supports. Speaking of the thousands of Nova Scotians with disabilities, [Premier Houston stated](#):

“Their basic human rights have not been honoured nor respected...I would like to offer an unreserved apology for the historic systemic discrimination that persons with disabilities have experienced in Nova Scotia.

It is how we collectively treat our most vulnerable citizens that defines us as a society. In particular, vulnerable people rely on their government to level the playing field and we have failed Nova Scotians living with disabilities in this regard.

What has happened is deeply shameful, it is wrong, it is not what Nova Scotia stands for and I am sorry.”

With even more important milestones coming up in this the [second year of the Remedy](#), the DRC calls upon the Premier to make good on his historic apology by ensuring that his officials have both the resources they need and the sense of priority to get the Remedy implemented within five years as required by law.

Vicky Levack, DRC spokesperson, who was present when Premier Houston made his historic apology, had this to say about the Province’s implementation of its obligations under the Order: “You made a promise to Nova Scotians. When you made your apology, I took it on good faith that you would follow through, but now seeing the failure to meet these milestones, leaves my trust shaken.”

DRC legal counsel, Vince Calderhead, commented that: “The terms of the Order are legally binding on the Province, and it needs to give this Order its utmost respect by making each obligation an urgent priority. The human rights Monitor, Michael Prince, appointed under the Order, will now provide his first report by the end of July so that the public has a clear accounting on how these human rights obligations will be achieved going forward.

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