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November 2015

Community Update

Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation Increases Asset Exemptions to \$100,000 for PWD Recipients

Dear Community Partner,

Starting December 1st 2015, people receiving the Persons with Disabilities benefit (PWD) will be able to have up to **\$100,000** in assets without it impacting their eligibility for assistance. For couples where both individuals have the PWD designation this amount will be **\$200,000**. In addition PWD recipients will be able to receive cash gifts without it impacting their disability designation. As well, the annual cap of \$8,000 on trust payments will be eliminated.

DABC believes this change represents a very positive and significant change to the way in which the Province provides disability assistance to British Columbians with disabilities. It will give people with disabilities who receive assistance more flexibility, choice, dignity, and hope for the future. DABC congratulates and thanks the Province for making this innovative change.

The change means that families and friends of people with disabilities will be able to provide financial support to their loved ones without impacting their eligibility for assistance. It will also help people with disabilities who have fewer financial resources or opportunities. DABC receives requests for help from many PWD recipients who find themselves in difficult situations when it comes to financial windfalls.

People call us for help when they have been left a few thousand dollars. A relatively small amount, it can be both a wonderful event and a great challenge to someone receiving disability assistance. The amount is often too small to make it feasible to open a trust, but too high to remain eligible for assistance.

Often they will have to leave assistance for a month or two until they fall below the \$5,000 asset limit. It's very sad to see these wasted opportunities for people with so few resources. This will all change on December 1st. For more information on the Ministry's announcement, please go to: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015SDSI0069-001847>

While DABC is thrilled about this change, we will continue to urge the Province to **increase the PWD rates**. An increase to the PWD rates is long overdue and needs to be urgently addressed.

Over the next while we will be updating all of our publications to reflect this change to the rules on assets for PWD recipients.

Best regards,

Val Stapleton, Membership and Outreach Coordinator
Jane Dyson, Executive Director