



# Summary Report to the Minister

Ministry of Seniors  
and Community  
Supports

Administrative Review of the  
Persons with Developmental  
Disabilities (PDD) Program

October 2010

ADVISORY



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### DISCLAIMER

*We have relied on information provided to us by the PDD Program, as well as information collected through survey and focus sessions. Unless otherwise stated, the results presented in this report are based on 2009-2010 data obtained from extracts from the PDD Program Consolidated Services System (CSS) and IMAGIS records. We have not audited or otherwise validated the data; however, we have reviewed the information provided for internal consistency and reasonableness. The procedures we carried out do not constitute an audit, and as such, the content of this report should not be considered as providing the same level of assurance as an audit.*

*This report was prepared specifically for the Minister of Alberta Seniors and Community Supports pursuant to the terms of our contract dated June 14, 2010. The findings presented in this report address the criteria established specifically for this review.*

*No responsibility for loss or damages, if any, to any third party is accepted for reliance on this report.*

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## **Executive Summary**

Alberta supports approximately 9,300 adults with developmental disabilities through its PDD Program. The PDD Program is well known for the positive outcomes that it delivers for individuals and its innovative spirit. The PDD Program is a good program; it supplements the supports that individuals receive from their family, friends and community.

There is however a need to continue to improve the program. In 2009-2010, administration represented \$142 million of the total \$592 million that the PDD Program spent. The amount spent on administration is high in comparison to other similar programs in Alberta and other jurisdictions. The reasons for the high cost are many and complex, resulting from the delivery mechanisms used, the number of stakeholders involved in the Program, the duplication of efforts and the lack of efficient processes.

Our review was undertaken to help identify changes that could be made to achieve savings in administration and make the PDD Program better, while retaining the fundamental elements of relationship and community engagement that underpin Alberta's program.

Through our process we heard from those directly involved and impacted by the PDD Program. We heard what works, what is not working and we heard many ideas for the future.

Competing demands for scarce resources and individuals who have varying levels of need means that the PDD Program has to have the most efficient and effective processes in place to allow it to focus on ensuring individuals are supported with the right services at the right time.

Our recommendations to the Minister start from the view of the individual, the need for the system to provide for the same outcome regardless of where they come from within the province. It means a system that empowers individuals, families and guardians to navigate the system of support provided both by government and the broader community in as efficient and effective a way as possible.

We believe this means first recognizing Alberta is one community. It means providing for a consistent and common approach to communication, administration and to access. It also means promoting one relationship both with a case worker and where possible one service provider – addressing the critical need to know the individual, building trust and better outcomes.

We are recommending a new organization model, a new governance approach and a more efficient network of service providers for the PDD Program. Our recommendations incorporate balancing the need for decision making close to the individual with an organization model that promotes equity and consistency.

## Introduction

The PDD Program is a provincial government program that provides funding for supports for adults with developmental disabilities. The PDD Program helps individuals in their homes, helps them to be involved in their community, and it helps them at work. The PDD Program also helps to make others aware of how adults with developmental disabilities can be part of the community. The PDD Program is designed to supplement the support of family, friends and community members.

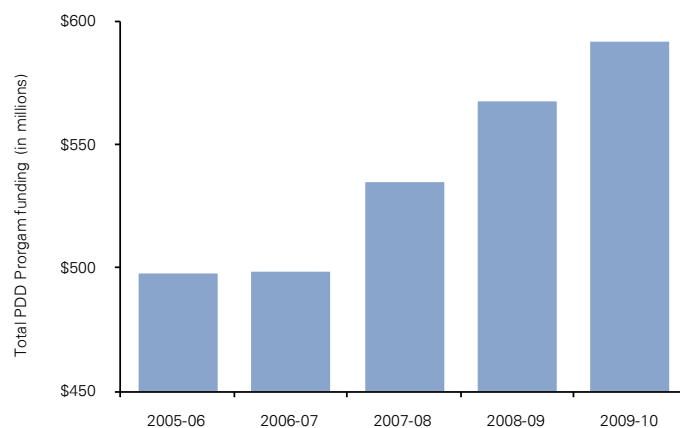
The PDD Program is rooted in the principles of relationship and community engagement and is known for its innovation and leading practices in serving individuals with developmental disabilities. Over the past few years, a number of changes have been introduced to help ensure the PDD Program continues to respond to individuals needs, and achieve positive outcomes for individuals.

On June 16, 2010, the Honourable Mary Anne Jablonski, Minister of Seniors and Community Supports, announced that KPMG would be conducting a review of the administration functions and related costs of the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Program (PDD Program).

Over the past five years, the total funding for the PDD Program has steadily increased (as shown in the chart on the right). This total funding also includes the administration costs for the PDD Program. The government wants to make sure that the PDD Program is sustainable into the future to make it even better.

Our recommendations identify ways to make the PDD Program more efficient and more effective, and at the same time retain the fundamental elements of relationship and community engagement that underpin Alberta's PDD Program.

**Total PDD Program Funding (2005 to 2010)**



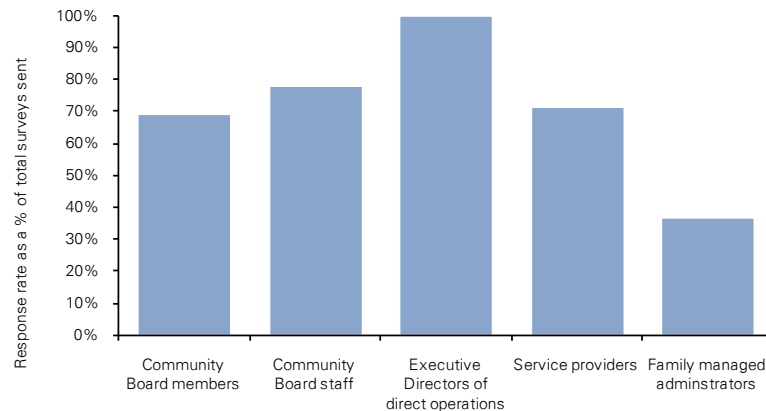
## Our Approach

Our review was governed by the terms of reference outlined by the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports. Our review looked at the all activities that relate to administration. Specifically this included PDD Program's governance model (Community Board governance), operating model (Community Board operations and Department roles and responsibilities) and network of delivery mechanisms (257 service providers, 935 family managed administrators and 3 direct operations). We collected input from a broad spectrum of stakeholders from across the province. This was done in an open and inclusive manner to ensure all views were considered equally.

As one of our first steps, we sent out surveys to over 1,200 stakeholders of the PDD Program to understand where the current challenges were and what they believed to be some of the opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the PDD

Program. This included Community Board members, Community Board staff, senior management for the direct operations, service providers and family managed administrators. In total, we received responses from 630 stakeholders. The chart to the right shows the response rate for each of the stakeholder groups.

**Survey Response Rates**



In addition, focus sessions and interviews with select participants were scheduled in each of the six PDD Regions. A total of 235 participants provided their thoughts on current challenges and opportunities for improvement through interviews and / or focus sessions. In addition to the stakeholders noted in the survey process above feedback was also solicited from families / guardians / self advocates, the Office of the Public Guardian, PDD Program Branch staff, the Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL) and the Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS).

Financial and performance data was collected for each Region – including key operational metrics, procedures, job descriptions and organizational charts. We also analyzed financial and client data taken from the IMAGIS and the Consolidated Services System (CSS) for Community Boards, Program Branch, direct operations, service providers and family managed administrators.

We compared the PDD Program to other jurisdictions for governance, operational models and delivery structures. We reviewed nine jurisdictions across Canada, the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom to identify some of the emerging / leading practices in the developmental disability and human services sector that could improve the long-term sustainability of the PDD Program.

## **PDD Program Administration**

The PDD Program in itself is not an easy program to administer. Unlike an income support program which is formula driven, the PDD Program is dependent upon relationships and special knowledge of Coordinators and others involved in the delivery of supports. It requires assessing each individual’s needs and developing a unique service plan.

Administration is all of the activities that are not a frontline service or support to the individual. For example, the staff that directly support an individual in their home or provide employment training would be a direct support cost. All other costs associated with delivering the support, including conducting the needs assessment, setting up the contract, providing staff supervision to the front-line support worker,

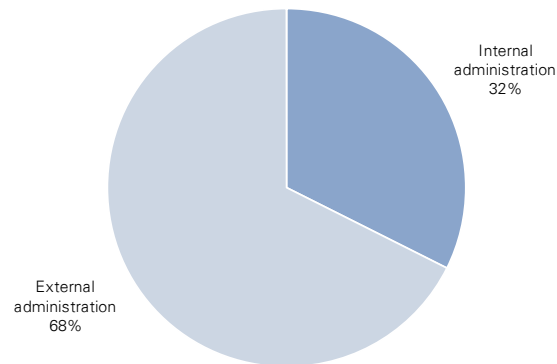
and any supporting office costs such as staff training, and facility costs incurred by the service providers would be considered administration.

### **Cost of Administering the PDD Program**

The PDD Program provided support to approximately 9,300 individuals in 2009-2010. The Program spent a total of \$592 million. Administration, as we defined it, cost approximately \$142 million. Of the \$142 million, \$46 million related to internal administration costs and \$96 million was recorded for external administration.

The internal costs include all costs associated with the Program Branch, and the Community Boards, including direct operations. External costs are administration costs paid under contracts to the service providers and family managed administrators.

**Total PDD Program Administration**



#### Internal administration

The \$46 million of internal administration costs includes \$31 million related to activities and functions carried out by the Community Boards (\$25 million), and the Program Branch (\$6 million) to fund, monitor and evaluate the delivery of supports to individuals and promote inclusion.

The internal administration also includes \$15 million that was incurred by direct operations for the overall management of the operations (including amounts for personal living, loss prevention, transportation, recreation, etc.) and directly incurred facility operation costs. This excludes amounts incurred by other Government of Alberta departments.

#### Service providers and family managed administrators

The \$96 million of external administration costs includes \$40 million of service delivery expenditures and \$56 million of administration costs paid by the PDD Program to service providers as defined by the standard contract.

The \$96 million of administration costs also includes approximately \$0.5 million relating to total administration paid to family managed administrators. This includes, for example, bookkeeping costs, WCB premiums, insurance, training and other expenses that families may incur in the administration of their agreement with the PDD Program.

The standard contract for service providers and family managed administrators defines:

- Service delivery expenditures (\$40 million) as staff costs related to the supervision of staff providing the front line services, program expenses such as the cost of admission for the staff member attending an event with an individual, and staff travel costs related to providing the support.
- Administration (\$56 million) as staff costs related to management and administrative support staff, administrative office costs and operating costs.

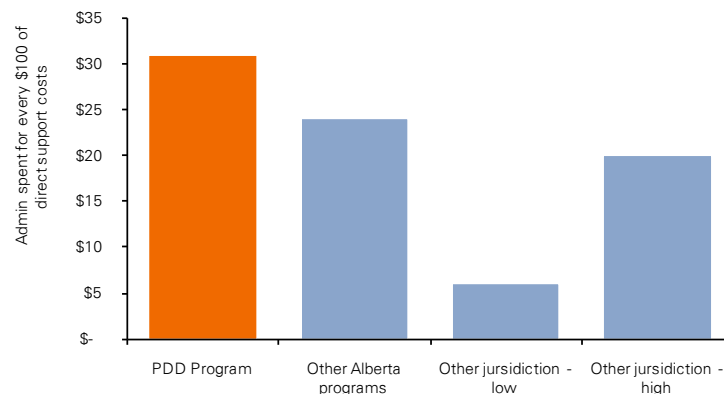
Community Boards have indicated that they generally target total administration (service delivery expenditures and administration) to be 20% of the direct support costs<sup>1</sup> for service providers. There are however, no formal provincial standards or guidelines to establish what an appropriate level of funding that the PDD Program should cover for either service delivery expenditure or administration.

### **PDD Program Administration Costs are High**

In 2009-2010, for every \$100 spent on the direct supports provided to individuals, the PDD Program spent an additional \$31 on administration.

In comparison, other programs in Alberta that support persons with disabilities or provide similar resources spend an additional \$24 on administration for every \$100 of direct support costs. Other jurisdictions reviewed, including British Columbia, Western Australia and Massachusetts, spend between an additional \$6 and \$20 on administration for every \$100 of direct support costs.

**Comparison of Administration Costs**



### **PDD Program Administration Costs Vary**

We analyzed total administration by Region and by delivery mechanism. To provide a basis for comparison we calculated the total administration cost incurred per individual.

Depending on what Region an individual is located in and what delivery mechanism (i.e. service provider, family managed, direct operation) is used to deliver the support, the average total cost of administration per year (internal and external) per individual ranges from \$3,000 to \$31,000.

<sup>1</sup> Direct support costs are staffing expenditures relating to front-line staff who provide supports in the categories of Community Access, Community Living, or Employment supports.

Between Community Boards, costs ranged from \$2,000 to \$4,900 per individual, between service providers within Regions and across Regions costs ranged from \$200 to \$45,000 per individual, and between the three delivery mechanisms costs ranged from \$370 per individual for family managed to \$27,000 per individual for direct operations.

The administration cost per individual per service provider averaged \$8,800 per year in Alberta. 54% of service providers in the network have an administration cost below the average, while 46% of service providers have an administration cost above the average.

FY2010 PDD System Administration Cost per individual	
Administration cost per individual	% of service providers
Less than \$2,500	15%
\$2,501 to \$5,000	11%
\$5,001 to \$8,800	28%
\$8,801 to \$10,000	12%
More than \$10,000	34%

Of the average \$8,800 of total administration per individual per year, approximately \$3,600 relates to service delivery expenditures (e.g. supervisory costs of frontline staff) and \$5,200 relates to administration.

### Drivers of Administration

A review of the detailed cost data, surveys, interviews and focus sessions, as well a comparison to leading practices determined that the following are the primary contributing factors for the high and variable costs.

#### *Service provider network*

Variation in the total administration cost by service provider is partly explained by the number of individuals supported and by the types of services delivered.

Service providers who support more than 100 individuals (17% of service providers) have a lower administration cost per individual than those that support less than 100 individuals (83% of service providers). Additionally, service providers that deliver complementary services for example community living and community access supports, had a lower administration cost per individual than their peers.

Service provider administration per individual		
No. of Individuals Supported	% of Service Providers	Average total admin cost per individual
Less than 50	66%	\$ 9,418
50 to 100	17%	\$ 9,252
100 to 200	12%	\$ 7,692
200 to 300	3%	\$ 8,704
300 to 400	1%	\$ 7,271
More than 400	1%	\$ 5,706

The number of service providers contributes to lower efficiency through the duplication of corporate services (e.g. finance, human resources, etc.). Although the majority of service providers indicated that they share training resources for their staff, there are opportunities to increase the sharing of information technology solutions and support, human resource and payroll support, office space and vehicles and transportation.

We also believe that the level of sophistication of service providers contributes to the variability and higher costs incurred by some providers compared to others. The use of technology ranges from custom

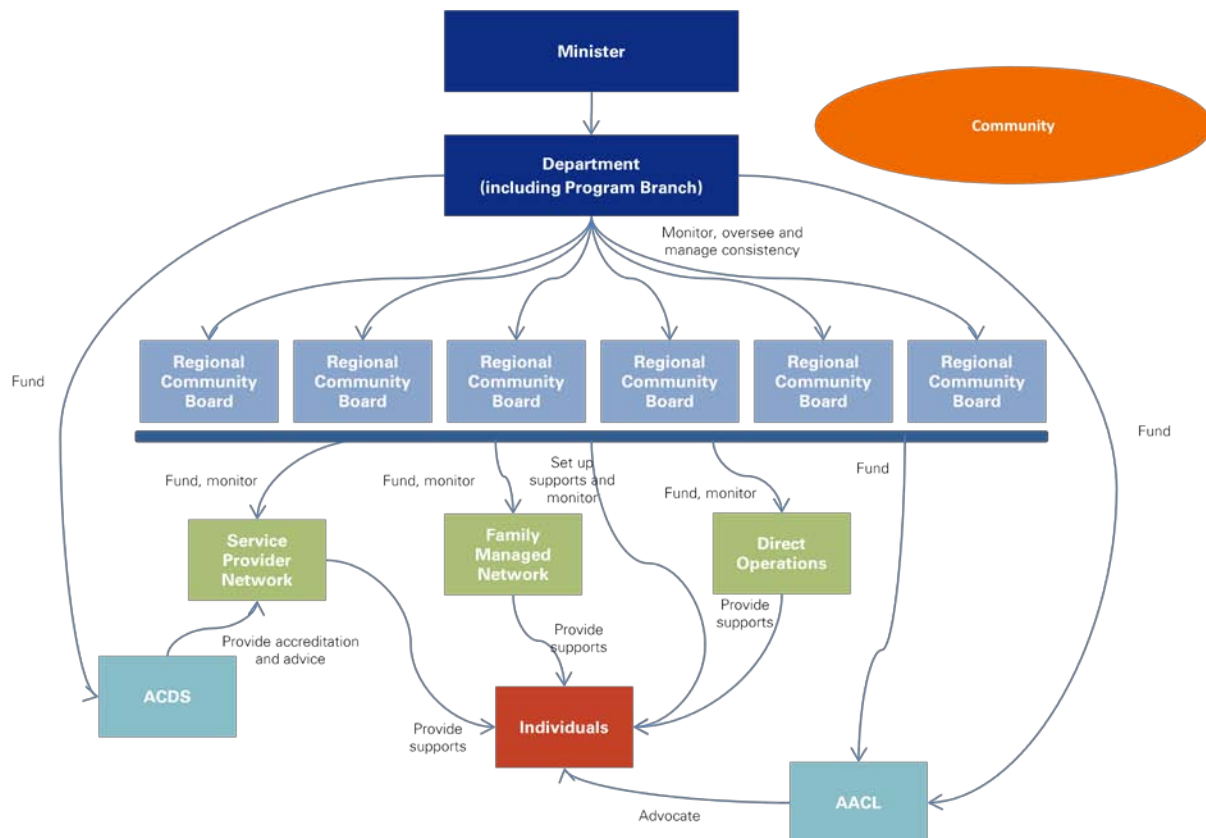
made systems to handwritten log books or Microsoft Office products. Recordkeeping is extensive, as service providers document, for example, the daily activities of individuals, staff and compliance activities (such as water temperatures). Greater reliance on manual records and processes are generally less cost efficient and less effective.

As well, within the network there are over 3,000 individuals that access supports from more than one service provider or delivery mechanism (e.g. two service providers, one family managed agreement and one service provider, etc.). The average administration cost for these individuals is \$18,000 compared to the average administration cost per individual.

We recognize that for various reasons, including differences in the types of supports provided and different requirements to meet the unique challenges individuals' face it is not reasonable to assume that all individuals can be supported by one service provider. At the same time, there would appear to be significant opportunity to reduce administration cost through either the reduction of the number of individuals receiving support from multiple service providers and better leveraging of shared corporate services across the network.

*A complex delivery system with many stakeholders and multiple reporting relationships and operating practices*

The multiple stakeholders (illustrated in the diagram on the following page) involved in the current delivery system results in significant overlap in responsibilities and duplication across all levels.



Each Community Board has designed and implemented a different operating model and a different staffing model. Roles and responsibilities and priorities also differ, resulting in different experiences for individuals across the Province. As an example, the average number of individuals that a PDD Coordinator is responsible for ranges from 57 to 290 individuals between Regions.

We could not explain why there should be different operating models. In comparing each Region to each other and the Provincial distribution, the relative use of delivery mechanisms (service provider, family managed and direct operation) by each of the six (6) Regions is similar. We also noted that the types of support available in each Region are also very similar, as 90% to 95% of program funding is provided through community living and community access supports by Region.

We considered the units of support<sup>2</sup> provided to individuals within each Region. The results show that each Region generally has a similar distribution of individuals receiving supports.

In addition, using the Supports Intensity Scale<sup>3</sup> (SIS) scores available to date, the level of need of individuals supported is similar across Regions.

#### *Unclear roles and responsibilities*

The roles and responsibilities of PDD Program staff are often unclear and differ by Region. This is specifically the case for the roles of Coordinators (those who deal primarily with individuals) and Contract Managers (those who manage contracts with service providers). The role and responsibility delineation between these two functions is often blurred.

In some Regions, the role of Coordinator and Contract Manager is amalgamated into one, and in others, the role is split between the two. There is often limited information shared between the two roles, and the detailed responsibilities, whether combined into the one role or two roles, differ by Community Board. This may stem from differences in underlying priorities of the Regions and whether the focus is on the individual / family or on the service provider.

In some Regions, the Coordinator has a strong relationship with the individual and may act as an advocate on the individual's behalf, while in other Regions, the caseloads are too large that Coordinators do not know their individuals well enough, and generally rely on what is reported to them by service providers or families and guardians.

In addition, across Regions the skills and capabilities in finance, analytics, forecasting and budgeting and information technology varies.

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<sup>2</sup> A unit of support is equivalent to one hour of Community Living, Employment or Community Access supports.

<sup>3</sup> The SIS is commonly used by other jurisdictions and is designed to measure the level of supports that people with developmental disabilities need in order to live in and be connected with their community. At the time of our review approximately 1,100 individuals had been assessed using the SIS tool across the province.

### *Overlap of monitoring activities*

There are numerous standards defined through legislation and policy that service providers must comply with. We heard from many Community Board staff and Program Branch staff that they are involved in some activity related to monitoring service providers, family managed administrators or individuals directly.

In addition, other regulatory authorities and / or government departments conduct reviews of service providers' compliance to standards including:

- Occupational Health and Safety
- Protections for Persons in Care Branch
- Supportive Living Accommodation Branch
- Workers Compensation Board

Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS) also assesses service provider compliance to the Creating Excellence Together (CET) standards.

The PDD Program has not defined what standards and performance indicators should be monitored, the frequency with which they should be monitored, or who should perform the activity. As a result, similar activities are performed by the PDD Community Boards, the Program Branch, the accrediting body (ACDS) and other government ministries and programs. Furthermore, there is no consolidated view of the results to provide an overall assessment of service providers or the PDD Program as a whole.

### *Excessive manual activities and the lack of automation*

Community Boards rely on a common system, the Consolidated Services System (CSS), to record, manage and retain client information. CSS was developed in 1998 and was originally designed to be a payment system. Over the years, functionality has been added so that it can also track additional information about clients, although it does not have the capability to act as an effective case management system. Furthermore, it does not effectively support many of the information management requirements and is missing key functionalities to support required workflows for the review and approval processes. This relates to contracting with service providers, setting up individuals with supports, managing change requests and invoice payments.

We heard and evidenced through our review concerns regarding data integrity with the data actually recorded in CSS. To address these concerns, staff are maintaining duplicate case files, creating duplicate records using excel spreadsheets and creating additional tracking documents. Because client information is stored in so many different locations, there is no single source of truth and staff time is required to find and reconcile the multiple sources of information.

The PDD Program has not implemented electronic commerce with service providers allowing service providers to access a web-based, self-service portal to the PDD Program where they would be able to submit invoices, run reports, access relevant documents, obtain historical information or review contract requirements. Service providers maintain a client file for each individual, with much of the information

being similar to information the Community Board also retains. If CSS had interface capabilities this would allow service providers and family managed administrators to access the same information as the PDD Program staff, reducing the duplicate files. It should be recognized that the overall level of sophistication in the service provider network would need to increase to leverage this technology.

Technology enabled applications are also not currently available to manage supplier contracts. As a result, there is a higher reliance on manual reconciliations using Excel spreadsheets. Given the lack of interface with CSS that service providers and family managed administrators have, approximately 15,000 invoices generated from provider systems need to be manually entered into CSS and other tracking records each year.

It is difficult to manage and monitor the achievement of client outcomes without an effective use of technology.

*The lack of comprehensive information on the PDD Program, including clarity of the core businesses*

One of the more significant challenges for PDD Program staff is clearly conveying how the mandate and core businesses translate into funding decisions at the individual level. As part of the Minister's six (6) Priority Actions for the PDD Program, a mission and core businesses for the PDD Program were approved with the objective of providing clarity regarding the mandate of the PDD Program and provincial consistency in the core supports that the PDD Program funds. However, we heard and saw that many stakeholders are still unclear as to what the boundaries or limits of the PDD Program are. Considerable effort is spent by staff in helping individuals and families understand what the PDD Program can provide and what it cannot.

Individuals, families and guardians told us that navigating through the system was difficult and confusing. We heard a wide variation in experiences ranging from very good to very difficult and frustrating. We were told that their experience with the PDD Program was in most respects related to who helped them, often just to answer basic questions. This includes both the PDD Program staff member(s) that assess their needs and determine the supports available, and the service provider(s) staff members.

*We are not sure what the program is able to provide us.*

*We receive different explanations of what is available, how to access the support we need, and who we should talk to for information.*

*Although some of us found it easy to access the support we needed, many others say it was very hard.*

*Only after a long time or after fighting back did we get the support we needed.*

*It is really hard to move to a new city or town and if we do we have to start the process all over.*

(Source: Family Managed and Families / Guardians / Self Advocate Focus Sessions and Family Managed Survey Responses)

Comprehensive information clearly explaining what the PDD Program funds and how the level of support is determined for an individual is not readily available.

As well, although there are numerous sources of information there is no common communication strategy across the system. A very visible example of this occurring is the seven (7) unique and different websites maintained by Alberta Seniors and Community Supports as well as each Community Board. Each site is different, with varying content and quality.

#### *Lack of use of family managed option*

Compared to the service provider network and direct operations, family managed supports are the least expensive option, with an average administration cost per individual of \$500 per year. Currently only 10% of individuals use this option.

We heard there is strong support from the family managed administrators using the family managed option as it provides greater flexibility and choice and is less costly to the system.

*The family managed program provided the flexibility and the choice we were looking for.*

*The administration costs less, in part because as the Administrator we do more of the work ourselves with no reimbursement, but we also incur fewer costs.*

*The support meets our families need better and allows us more control.*

(Source: Family Managed Focus Sessions and Family Managed Survey Responses)

We also heard that the process for managing the ongoing supports appears to be less complicated once the contract has been set up. It should be recognized though that Community Board staff do spend additional time providing ongoing support to family managed administrators. This time is not tracked and therefore not quantifiable.

## **The Compelling Case for Change**

There are no significant differences across the Regions in the individuals being supported by the PDD Program. Each Region has a comparable distribution of those needing minimal supports and those with complex requirements. Notwithstanding that each individual is unique as is their combination of needs, the supports that the PDD Program provides to meet each individuals needs is well defined.

And yet we see significant differences in the administration of the program, including:

- The cost to administer the program between the six (6) Community Boards and across the service provider network

- The average time to manage the intake and assessment of individuals needs entering the system
- The caseloads for Coordinators across the province, and
- The levels of capability both within the PDD Program and the service provider network

Each Community Board has adopted a different approach to how they are organized, and have placed different priorities on funding, monitoring, evaluating and promoting inclusion. Each Community Board is working hard to do what they believe is right for their Region, but in doing so are not leveraging best practices and operating approaches.

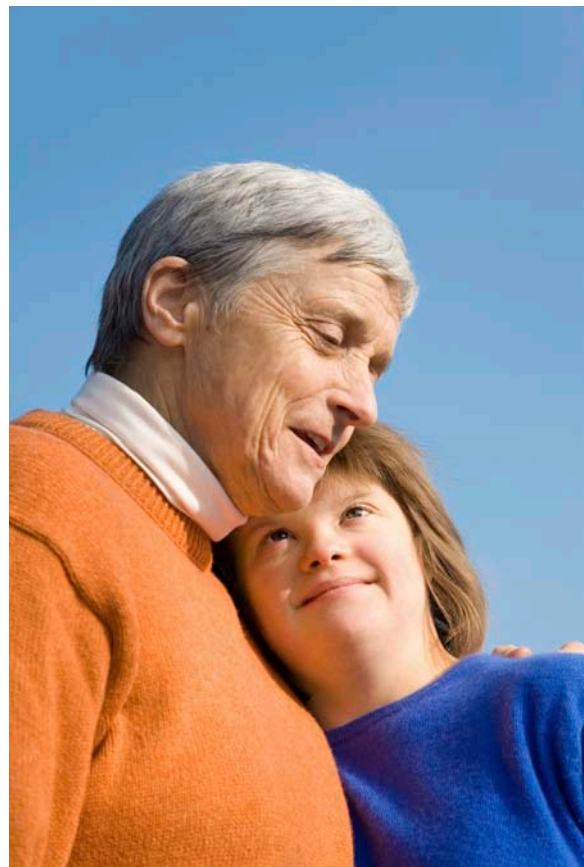
The duplication that also exists in the system is far reaching – from the duplication of corporate functions (including finance, human resource management, information systems), to the development and implementation of operating policies and practices in each Region, and arguably across the service provider network represents a significant cost to the program.

The extent of time that it appears to take to communicate basic principles of the PDD Program, what the Program funds and does not, who is eligible and how that is determined is high. There is no consistent messaging across the PDD Program, leading to greater confusion, frustration and often mistrust. The impact of this drives additional costs, as it potentially increases the volume of appeals and funding review requests.

The PDD Program is not formula driven; it relies on staff making difficult decisions around the relative funding and support that the PDD Program can provide to all eligible individuals. Achieving equity and transparency requires a system of clear accountabilities across the multiple stakeholders, it means having a common understanding of the mandate, agreement on the priorities and assessment of risk, consistent communications and approaches to delivering services, and it requires trust between the stakeholders.

The PDD Program is about helping individuals with developmental disabilities live as independently as possible in the community. Yet, when we look at the system there is a significant focus on monitoring the financial management of dollars. What is needed is a better way to reduce the financial administration, promote best practices and improve the assessment of client outcomes.

Implicit in what we heard and in what we observed is that trust between the various stakeholder groups is missing.



The impact on the individual ranges from frustration in navigating the system to inequities resulting from delays in receiving adequate supports. The impact on the system is that it is not as effective or efficient as it can or should be.

## **Strategy for the Future State**

This review by its nature has identified a number of areas where the administration of the PDD Program can be improved. It was focused specifically on the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration of the PDD Program. The recommendations arising from this review will assist in enhancing the current PDD Program in Alberta and make it even better. It will be important that as changes are made to the PDD Program administration, that the fundamental elements of relationship and community engagement are not lost.

Our proposed strategy for the PDD Program's future state will help to support the Alberta Government's vision to move social-based assistance towards an approach that is citizen centred and integrated across ministries and programs. The goal is to make social programs and services more effective, consistent and easy to navigate, while ensuring they continue to be available for Albertans in the future. This includes enhancing service integration and alignment not only within government but also with community partners.

Citizen-centred social-based assistance means focusing on people rather than programs and puts individuals at the centre of service delivery instead of operating within traditional program systems and vertical silos. Already underway, Alberta Supports will be a made in Alberta solution for an integrated citizen-centred approach to provide social supports.

Our recommendations reflect the need to recognize Alberta as one community. One community that is served by one organization, one network of service providers and one set of policies. This will allow for a consistent and common approach to communication, administration and access for individuals. It also means promoting one relationship between a case worker and, where possible, one service provider – allowing for the ability to know the individual better, build trust and achieve better outcomes.

Our recommendations to the Minister are:

- Dissolve the six (6) Community Boards and create one organization under the direct authority of the government. We believe the evidence strongly supports creating one organization under the direct authority of the government, eliminating the need for a separate agency with a Board of Directors.
- Establish an Advisory Council to provide for community governance. The Advisory Council would not have fiduciary responsibilities and would report directly to the Minister.
- Adopt a matrix organization model. Under this model, staff will have direct reporting relationships to functional leaders. This model also reflects a need for a Regional Director reflecting the need for the critical role that today's Chief Executive Officer plays in engaging the community.
- Improve the efficiency of the service provider network by implementing a new procurement strategy to optimize the number, size and efficiency of the service providers within it.

- Implement additional resources to support and enhance the use of the family managed option. We believe that any additional cost incurred would be minimal and would be offset by the enhanced use of the family managed option
- Replace CSS with an integrated case management system that will allow for one view of the individual by both the PDD Program and the service provider network.

The decision to appoint a Board or not, and whether a functional or matrix organization be implemented, will require further discussion by the Ministry.

The following expands on the recommendations noted above.

### **Simplified Organization**

The current organization structure is complex with multiple reporting relationships that overlap and result in duplication of many activities and functions. We believe that the current structure presents significant challenges to achieving provincial consistency, fairness and equity, and to support a responsive service delivery system. The review findings highlight that there are distinct differences in operating practices and approaches leading to different results across the Regions, and that there are questions around fairness and equity. These differences ranged from the type of supports provided to family managed administrators to significant differences in caseloads between Community Boards.

It is our opinion that to achieve optimum effectiveness and efficiency, the PDD Program delivery should be delivered by one organization. Many of the challenges that the PDD Program faces result from inconsistent operating practices across the Regions.

Based on a literature review and a review of a selection of Canadian and international jurisdictions (see Appendix B for a list of sources) the preponderance of evidence supports the use of one organization to oversee the delivery of supports for persons with developmental disabilities. In total we looked at nine (9) jurisdictions and all but two (2) used a one-organization concept.

The advantages of using one organization include:

- Elimination of duplicate activities and functions
- Enhanced consistency in achieving client outcomes, managing and structuring the service provider network and improved communications
- Optimized use of shared resources for corporate functions (such as finance and IT)
- Increased ability to leverage and implement best practices
- Reduction in the impact that different operating models currently have on service providers that deliver supports in more than one Region

We did consider whether the key challenges and issues identified in our review would be effectively addressed in a reduction in the number of regional Community Boards to two or three boards thus improving the chances of synergy and consistency. Our opinion is that although some improvements

could be achieved, the same challenges would still exist in achieving consistency and more importantly, in promoting fairness and equity across the restructured regions.

As long as more than one organization is making funding decisions, and addressing funding reviews, there will continue to be inconsistent results and there will be no clearer roles and responsibilities between the various stakeholders.

We also considered how the current governance model of the PDD Program blends both corporate and community governance responsibilities into the role of the Community Boards and how effective the current structure is in meeting the respective responsibilities. It is important to make the distinction between corporate and community governance, as they serve different purposes and achieve different results:

Corporate Governance	Community Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets the 'tone at the top' of the organization</li> <li>• Provides oversight of management and financial reporting</li> <li>• Develops strategy, business planning, and performance expectations</li> <li>• Develops corporate ethics and codes of conduct</li> <li>• Ensures compliance with laws and regulations</li> <li>• Maintains an effective audit function</li> <li>• Provides oversight of the risk management and internal control frameworks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for community involvement in decision making</li> <li>• Informs community of issues that are relevant to them</li> <li>• Fosters information sharing and learning</li> <li>• Supports development of innovative programs and services and identifying changes to provincial policies and programs</li> <li>• Creates community connections and encourages local participation</li> <li>• Builds trust with the community</li> </ul>

Although the current structure does reflect the importance of engagement with the community through a regional organization, the findings from our review suggest that the role that the Boards play in community governance is varied. Through the survey, Board members in many circumstances noted that some of the activities of community governance were not done as well as others. For example, contributing to the improved capacity of a region scored higher as being done well compared to engaging the community.

In addition, through the focus sessions held, and the surveys and interviews, many stakeholders were unaware of the role and the activities of the Boards. Some of the findings arising from focus sessions and surveys with other stakeholders include:

- It was perceived that Boards may not have the ability to influence decisions made or to effect any real change in the community
- Boards use a variety of methods (e.g. open board meetings, newsletters, etc.) to connect with their community, but there is no measurement conducted to determine whether these are effective
- Boards do not effectively share best practices with each other
- Board members are passionate about supporting adults with developmental disabilities and try to build trust with the community, however, there still is a low level of trust across the PDD system

### **One Board or No Board**

If the PDD Program moves to one organization the government has an option to move to a one board structure reporting through to the Minister, or to eliminate the board structure altogether.

The decision to retain a board structure or not should be evaluated against a number of critical decisions, which are described further below:

Consideration	Assessment of PDD Program
<i>Public policy is the responsibility of government, whereas agencies and boards are established to carry out public policy. An agency or board can be established when there is an ability to clearly distinguish between development of public policy and delivery.</i>	Historically the lack of clarity in mandate and core businesses, as well as the lack of a standard assessment tool has made it difficult to separate policy from delivery.  Notwithstanding that a number of recent changes are being implemented through the six Priority Actions, based on the nature and mandate of the PDD Program it is unlikely that a complete separation between policy and delivery can be achieved.
<i>The level of autonomy the government is willing to delegate.</i>	Since the dissolution of the PDD Provincial Board and the creation of the Program Branch to assist the Minister (to fulfill her authority/responsibility), the government has taken a proactive role in establishing operating policies and processes.
<i>The ability to provide for clear and appropriate allocation of responsibilities taking into account the responsibilities of the governing board, agency and department staff.</i>	Current responsibility lines are blurred between all stakeholders and as a result there is duplication in the monitoring and oversight activities completed at all levels by the governing board, agency and department staff.  Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities needs to be implemented across the PDD Program. This requirement will be harder to address under a board structure and it will be difficult to eliminate the overlap between the Board and the Ministry.

**Consideration**

**Assessment of PDD Program**

*The level of involvement the Minister will need to have in the affairs of the agency in order to balance the broader public interests.*

The Minister for the PDD Program has taken an active role in addressing and responding to concerns raised by individuals and others representing the interest of individuals served by the PDD Program.

*Who has the ultimate authority when there are dual reporting relationships by the CEO to both the Board and the Assistant Deputy Minister.*

CEO's have a dual reporting role to both the Board and to the Assistant Deputy Minister. Under the current Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister and the Boards the ultimate responsibility for the PDD Program lies with the Minister. Although the authority to act has been delegated to the Community Boards, the Minister still maintains ultimate authority, although in practice this may not be clear under the current structure.

According to draft General Agency Review Guidelines provided by Alberta's Agency Governance Secretariat, agencies are often used where public confidence in a process requires a high degree of autonomy from elected officials. The degree of autonomy is often associated with the need for independent advice or outside expertise, a need for ongoing advice from a range of stakeholders or community representatives, as well as autonomous decision making that promotes credibility and public confidence. A governance board structure is generally not appropriate where the mandate or business of the agency cannot be clearly defined.

Generally, the government should retain the responsibility and authority to make higher level policy decisions while agencies are given the responsibility and authority to implement policy. While agencies do advise on policy, this is primarily a Ministry role. Maintaining a single Board and clarifying the roles and responsibilities between the Ministry and the Board would reduce duplication, enhance consistency and simplify the current governance model significantly. However, if a Board is chosen it is our view that to be fully effective, the government needs to clearly distinguish their role as leading high level policy and that the Board has the authority to set operating policies and practices in accordance with the policy direction established by the government.

Our recommendation however is that the PDD Program be established under the direct authority of the government. In our view the evidence does not support the need for a separate agency under a Board of Directors.

**Establish an Advisory Council**

Regardless of whether a board structure is put in place or not, we would recommend establishing an Advisory Council to provide for community governance. Based on a review of comparable jurisdictions it is common practice to use an Advisory Council to support the community governance role.

The advantage of an independent Advisory Council puts the focus for the Council on connecting and engaging with the community rather than on corporate governance activities, and provides input and a clear depiction of community needs directly to the Ministry.

A good advisory structure ensures that:

- There is representation from each major geographic area and / or stakeholder group
- Members are trusted advisors in the field and can contribute to building credibility for the program
- The roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and it is clearly stated to have no fiduciary responsibility

Critical to the Advisory Council is dedicating resources within the PDD Program to enable the Council to provide effective and meaningful input into decision making. The establishment of a PDD staff position that is responsible for community engagement in a defined geographic area is key to this recommendation.

### **Design and Implement Common Processes**

Implementing one organization by its nature enables the design and implementation of common processes and practices across the province. The use of common processes and shared services are leading practices that enable cost efficiency and consistency. Common front counters and integrated case management are emerging best practices for social-based programs across jurisdictions.

Human services programs are often structured along functional lines, with the use of a shared services model to support their core business, focusing the business on the individual being served and not on administrative activities. Sharing resources reduces administrative costs and separates core business activities from corporate support activities.

The PDD Program's primary business is to fund, monitor and evaluate supports for individuals with developmental disabilities, not to contract service providers. The lack of common processes, operating practices, and procedures has led to inconsistent practices and inequity across the province.

In our view, the future organization should be designed along the following common functions<sup>4</sup> - Client Support Services, Contract Management, Client Case Management and Support functions (including Policy and Strategic Development, Finance, and Information and Technology). A more detailed description is provided in Appendix A.

As a result, key outcomes that can be achieved include:

- Enhanced role clarity between case management and procurement of services
- More consistent processes and improved client experiences with being setup for supports and accessing necessary information regarding the program
- Increased portability and sense of flexibility within the PDD Program for individuals to move anywhere in the Province

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<sup>4</sup> Creating common processes and business requirements is a first step. Ultimately the common processes should be enabled by technology which promotes one client record and enables efficient work flows.

- Less time spent by PDD Program staff reassessing and determining how to meet the needs of clients moving from other Regions
- Improved relationships between case managers and individuals, families and guardians.

### **Options for Organizational Model**

There are a number of organization models that could be used by the PDD Program for its future state. However there are a number of key considerations to be made.

Staff should be aligned by function with a direct reporting relationship to a Functional Leader. This would provide centralized control and oversight for policies, practices and decision making for the function, promoting consistency across regions.

A Regional Director role should be used to play an integral role in engaging and interacting with the community and individuals served by the Program, to maintain the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer position that exists today.

Roles and responsibilities and reporting relationships between functions should also be clearly defined so that staff are aware of who they report to and the appropriate skills are matched to the job requirements. Staff that have the necessary skills to complete their role are more likely to be efficient and effective compared to those that do not have the requisite skills.

### **Optimize the Network of Providers**

A strong provider network is critical to the PDD Program. The current provider network in the PDD system is comprised of over 1,100 providers. This includes 257 service providers, 935 family managed administrators and 3 direct operations.

The PDD Program should develop and implement a strategic approach to optimize the network of providers.

*Implement a competitive approach to procuring for services that promotes the bundling of services and recognizes strong performance*

Contracts should be designed to include specific performance metrics which not only reflect hours of service provided but reflect results achieved for individuals. Performance of service providers should also be considered in the procurement strategy.

The procurement strategy should encourage service providers to increase the bundling of service offerings, such as the natural bundles of services that individuals are typically eligible for (e.g. community living and community access supports, or employment and community access supports), and recognize strong performance.

Using a competitive procurement strategy, smaller service providers will reorganize and / or consolidate with other service providers which over time will reduce the number in the network. Typically this is done through the use of a prime contractor model. This type of model is used by many different service sectors, including the delivery of human services in the United States. Procurement is done through a

competitive bid process where a request is made for a provider to provide a fixed volume and bundle of services. The prime contractor facilitates the bundling of supports from a number of service providers. The prime contractor encourages and promotes greater use of shared services and administration across the network.

*Implement standard benchmarks to fund the cost of service delivery expenditures and administration costs*

Currently, service providers' effectiveness in delivering services is generally based on the review and analysis of units of support<sup>5</sup> provided to individuals. There is little assessment of the overall efficiency of the service providers' administration or service delivery. A detailed analysis of the cost of administration and service delivery should be completed to establish formal benchmarks or fees for service for the cost of administration (service delivery and administration).

Benchmarks should be transparent and service provider results actively monitored and reported.

*Review the opportunity to increase the family managed option and implement a structured program to provide better and consistent support across the Province for the family managed option*

We recognize that the family managed program will not be a viable alternative for many individuals. It requires family members and others to take on significant responsibilities and requires personal commitment and support that is often not available.

At the same time, we heard consistently that there is not sufficient information or support for the family managed option and that with increased knowledge and support, more individuals and families would see it as a preferable option. We believe that even a small increase in the use of the family managed option can provide significant savings for the PDD Program.

The family managed program should be encouraged through the development of resources such as PDD funded payroll service providers, information on the program being centrally available, and access to tools and templates that would assist the family managed administrator with hiring, performance appraisals and monitoring of staff and individuals. The majority of information has already been developed and exists in pockets across the Community Boards. Critical to the family managed program is ensuring that families that lack the skills required to manage an agreement and provision services have access to training. There needs to be mechanisms in place that prevent burnout of families who are overwhelmed with service provisioning.

*Consider and develop ways to reduce the reliance on direct operations*

Direct operations support fewer than 7% of PDD individuals but have the highest administration cost per individual. Direct operations have administration structures that are similar to that of a community-based service provider and conduct many of the same activities, but cost significantly more per individual.

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<sup>5</sup> A unit of support is equivalent to one hour of Community Living, Employment or Community Access support.

Other provincial Governments in Canada have made the decision to no longer support individuals through facilities owned and operated by their respective province. British Columbia closed its direct operations in 1996 and Ontario invested \$276 million to close its remaining direct operations in 2009.

The Ministry should explore opportunities to reduce the reliance on direct operations as a delivery mechanism where possible.

### **Supporting the Transition**

We believe that ahead of any change being implemented, appropriate planning needs to be developed to support and guide the transition. As an important first step, a transitional plan should be developed that will guide the changes and identify critical activities and milestones.

In addition, a change strategy should be developed ahead of final decisions being made. There is significant risk if changes are announced or communicated to stakeholders prior to having a plan that will inform PDD Program staff and provincial stakeholders of how and when changes will be made.

### **Conclusion**

Our review was undertaken to help identify changes that could be made to achieve savings in administration and make the PDD Program better, while retaining the fundamental elements of relationship and community engagement that underpin Alberta's program.

Competing demands for scarce resources and individuals who have varying levels of need means that the PDD Program has to have the most efficient and effective processes in place to allow it to focus on ensuring individuals are supported with the right services at the right time.

Our recommendations to the Minister allow for the system to provide for the same outcome regardless of where they come from within the province. It will create a system that empowers individuals, families and guardians to access PDD supports in as efficient and effective a way as possible.

## Appendix A – Glossary

The following presents definitions of key terms used throughout the report.

**Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL):** is a family-based, non-profit federation that advocates on behalf of children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families. As an advocacy organization, AACL supports families and individuals with developmental disabilities to be fully included in community life. AACL receives funding from the Program Branch and / or Community Boards for special projects.

**Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS):** is a non-profit association for 130 member agencies that provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities. ACDS facilitates interaction, co-operation and communication between members, the Government of Alberta Ministry funders, communities and other external stakeholders. ACDS is also the accrediting body for the Creating Excellence Together (CET) standards. The CET standards were developed through a partnership between the PDD Program and ACDS. All service providers that support adults with developmental disabilities are required to comply with CET standards as a condition of funding. ACDS receives funding from the Program Branch to complete accreditation and / or Community Boards for special projects.

**Agency Governance Secretariat:** promotes continuous improvement in good governance by supporting departments and agencies to implement the *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act* (APAGA), guided by policies in the Public Agencies Governance Framework.

**Assistant Deputy Minister:** is responsible for the operational leadership and oversight of the Regional operations of the PDD program and delivery system. The Assistant Deputy Minister assists in recruiting the CEO, chairs the CEO Forum, and provides direction and oversight of the CEOs on an operational day to day basis.

**Board:** refers to the governing body of the Community Board, which is comprised of up to nine (9) members that are appointed by the Minister. There are currently 52 Board members across the six (6) Regions. The Community Board is accountable to the Minister, through the Deputy Minister, for the execution of its roles and responsibilities. Community Boards are involved in setting Regional objectives and strategic direction, establishing Regional guidelines and procedures, overseeing and ensuring the delivery of programs, services and funding and facilitating community engagement.

**Board Chair:** is the liaison between the Board and the Minister. Board Chairs also monitor and appraise CEO performance in collaboration with the Assistant Deputy Minister. Board Chairs evaluate and report on Board performance to the Ministry.

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** reports to and is fully accountable to both the Board Chair and to the Assistant Deputy Minister. The CEO provides leadership, financial and human resource management, and direction in the operational management of the Community Board organization, and delivery of programs and services to ensure that the Community Board is effectively administered.

**Client Case Management:** provides a coordinated unit that manages the individuals case, determines needs, coordinates with the Contract Management for setting up services and establishes follow up and monitoring requirements.

**Client Service Coordinator or Coordinator:** PDD Program staff function involved with clients, determining and adjusting supports to meet their needs and regular monitoring of the supports received from service providers or family managed programs.

**Client Support Services:** provides the front-end interactions with new clients when they enter the PDD Program and provide / manage the common program information and other community resources that anyone, not just PDD-eligible, clients may access. This provides for a more streamlined approach to new clients and to providing information and resources to a broader range of stakeholders.

**Community Board:** refers to the entire Community Board organization, including the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Community Board staff.

**Contract Manager:** PDD Program staff function involved in managing contracts and relationships with service providers.

**Corporate Governance:** includes activities such as setting the 'tone at the top' of the organization; providing oversight of management and financial reporting; developing strategy, business planning, and performance expectations; developing corporate ethics and codes of conduct; ensuring compliance with laws and regulations; maintaining an effective audit function; and providing oversight of the risk management and internal control frameworks.

**Community Governance:** includes activities such as allowing for community involvement in decision making; informing the community of issues that are relevant to them; fostering information sharing and learning; supporting the development of innovative programs and services and identifying changes to provincial policies and programs; creating community connections and encouraging local participation; and building trust with the community.

**Contract Management:** provides a common function to manage the service provider contracts and family managed agreements and allows for the separation of funding from case management. This allows Contract Managers to be focused on the management of the contracts and the performance of providers.

**Council of Chairs:** is comprised of the Deputy Minister of Seniors and Community Supports and the Chairs of each of the six (6) PDD Community Boards. The primary focus of the Council of Chairs is to provide advice, feedback and recommendations to the Minister on provincial policy and program directions to ensure that the needs of adults with developmental disabilities are being met through the PDD program.

**Deputy Minister:** is the executive head of the Ministry who acts under the general direction of the Minister. The Deputy Minister also chairs the Council of Chairs.

**Direct operations:** facilities owned and operated by the Government of Alberta where individuals with developmental disabilities receive supports.

**Family managed program:** an option within the PDD Program, whereby a family managed administrator hires staff or service providers to provide the funded support for their family member with a developmental disability.

**Family managed administrator:** refers to the family or guardian that enters into a contractual arrangement with PDD to administer supports for an individual either by hiring staff or a service provider.

**Individuals:** persons with a developmental disability who receive supports from the PDD Program.

**Minister of Seniors and Community Supports:** is responsible for setting objectives and strategic direction for the provision of services to adults with developmental disabilities, allocating funding to and monitoring Community Boards and their operations.

**PDD Program (PDD):** provincial government program that provides funding for staff supports for adult Albertans with developmental disabilities.

**PDD Program Branch:** a unit within the Department of Seniors and Community Supports. Under direction from the Assistant Deputy Minister, the Program Branch provides advice, support and resources to the Community Boards, acts as a resource in policy development and interpretation to ensure provincial consistency.

**Providers:** generic term to refer to all those who provide services and supports to individuals with disabilities (includes both family managed administrators and service providers).

**Region:** refers to one of the six regions that the PDD Program has operations within and provides support.

**Service providers:** agencies that provide services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities. The total number of service providers noted in this report includes 189 service providers delivering supports to individuals and 68 organizations that received administration funding for special projects.

**Service provider network:** refers to the collective group of service providers delivering supports in any Region or across the Province.

**Supports Intensity Scale (SIS):** a tool used to evaluate the supports requirements of an individual with a developmental disability. The SIS measures the frequency, amount and type of supports an individual needs to participate in areas such as home living, community living, lifelong learning, employment, health and safety, and social activities.

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