

November 24, 2021

The Honourable John Horgan, Premier
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

RE: Request to add Truths of Institutionalization

Dear Premier:

The institutionalization of people with intellectual disabilities in British Columbia began more than 100 years ago with the creation of Woodlands institution in New Westminster. It ended on October 21, 1996, when Woodlands' last two residents moved to their new homes in the community. With their departure, British Columbia became the first province in Canada to close all of its large institutions for people with intellectual disabilities.

The era of abuse and neglect of people with disabilities who lived in institutions is largely unknown or misunderstood by most people in our province. Too often, it is only through the recollection of former residents, their families, and the community organizations that supported their journey to community that this story is told and kept alive.

As time passes and storytellers age there is great concern this history will be lost. Furthermore, there is continuous concern it would be repeated. Ableism, discrimination against people with disabilities, is still prevalent in most areas of our society.

One of Inclusion BC's long-standing goals has been to have this part of history officially included in B.C.'s education curriculum and there is a specific way to make it happen today.

Inclusion BC officially requests our provincial government to embed the course [Truths of Institutionalization: Past and Present](#) with additional BC content into the curriculum of our public education system and ensure the history of people with disabilities is never forgotten.

If you have any questions or to discuss any further details, you can reach me at kverschoor@inclusionbc.org or by phone at 604-209-8772.

Respectfully,



Karla Verschoor
Executive Director, Inclusion BC

Cc: Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education



Truths of Institutionalization: Past and Present

<https://truthsofinstitutionalization.ca/>

The purpose of this project is to create awareness, promote respect and encourage reflection on the human rights of people who have an intellectual disability in Canada.

The goal of this project is to engage young Canadians in conversations that raise awareness about the importance of community and inclusion. It does this by providing learning resources that explore the evolution of institutions and human rights in Canada. Specifically, visitors will hear first-hand experiences from survivors, study evidence-based research and explore the power of citizenship and social movements. We hope these efforts will help end the use of institutional models and practices today and in the future.