

**For Immediate Release  
August 13, 2015**

**Community Living Ontario Welcomes The Honourable John Baird  
as a Volunteer Strategic Advisor**

**Toronto, ON** – Community Living Ontario, a province-wide confederation representing over 12,000 people with intellectual disabilities, their families and more than 100 local Community Living associations, is pleased to welcome The Honourable John Baird to the organization as a Volunteer Strategic Advisor.

“Mr. Baird’s extensive political experience, at both the provincial and federal levels, will assist Community Living Ontario to enhance our existing relationships with government on matters of importance to our membership and the Developmental Services Sector,” said Chris Beesley, Chief Executive Officer of Community Living Ontario. “We also look forward to renewing our strong partnership with Mr. Baird and to develop new strategies on how best to draw attention to the many issues impacting the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities and those closest to them.”

John Baird is a Senior Advisor at Bennett Jones and a former Cabinet Minister in the Governments of Ontario and Canada. He served as Minister of Community and Social Services in the province from 1999 to 2002. In consultation with Community Living Ontario, Baird oversaw funding increases in the Developmental Services Sector, progress on deinstitutionalization in the province, and concerted efforts to assist youth transition from school to community life.

“I’m keen to assist the leadership at Community Living Ontario in a volunteer capacity and to work with advocates across the province on how we best present our case before government. Whether it’s services and supports, whether it’s employment or inclusion in everyday life, I really want to take a nonpartisan role in terms of advising the organization and their leadership on initiatives that help support the quality of life and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in Ontario,” stated John Baird. “Nothing in this sector has happened easily. It’s happened because of a lot of hard work from advocates, families and professionals, and we need to build on that momentum.”

**(continued next page)**

**Media Release – August 6, 2015  
Community Living Ontario  
Page 2**

In addition to his work with Bennett Jones, Mr. Baird is a Global Strategic Advisor to Hatch Ltd. He holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Political Studies from Queen's University at Kingston.

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The following people are available for interviews:

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*Community Living Ontario is a non-profit, province-wide confederation which advocates for, promotes and facilitates the full participation, inclusion and citizenship of people who have an intellectual disability. We are a progressive leader in the Developmental Services Sector representing more than 12,000 individuals, families, over 100 member organizations and community partners.*

For additional information, please contact:

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