

**For Immediate Release
November 17, 2015**

Ending Admissions to Sheltered Workshops Important First Step
Community Living Ontario Sees Further Action Required

Toronto, ON – Community Living Ontario is cautiously optimistic that comments made by the Minister of Community and Social Services to the media regarding sheltered workshops will lead to more meaningful employment and civic opportunities in community for people who have an intellectual disability. In an article published by the *Toronto Star* on November 16, Minister Helena Jaczek indicated her intentions to prevent sheltered workshops from accepting new participants.

“It’s our longstanding view that sheltered workshops are no longer viable or relevant in this day and age, nor have they been for many years. We applaud the Minister in coming to that conclusion and to stop new entries,” said Chris Beesley, Chief Executive Officer for Community Living Ontario.

“We look forward to working with the Ministry on supporting people in the transition out of workshop environments and assisting local associations, families and individuals in terms of the conversations and benefits related to alternatives in the community, wherever their interests lie.”

Community Living Ontario, which represents over 12,000 people with intellectual disabilities, their families and more than 100 local associations in the province, is pleased with the government’s renewed interest in providing viable options; in 1992, then Minister Marion Boyd committed to providing community-based alternatives to sheltered workshops for people with disabilities, which was followed by the *Final Report to the Minister from the Working Group on Alternatives to Sheltered Workshops and Segregated Settings* in 1995.

“The decision to prevent new admissions to sheltered workshops also needs to be part of a broader discussion on a collaborative, person-centered approach to assisting people who are

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currently participating in workshops or other segregated settings to pursue alternatives in the community,” added Beesley.

“Community Living Ontario’s membership passed a resolution in 1985 to work towards alternatives to sheltered workshops. Since then, there are many examples of positive outcomes from member associations that have closed sheltered workshops in favour of individualized employment supports and opportunity for civic engagement in community.”

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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.

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