

PRESS RELEASE: NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION APPLAUDS SETTLEMENT IN MANITOBA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTRE LAWSUIT

For Immediate Release

May 5, 2023

WINNIPEG, MB - The National Task Force on Deinstitutionalization joins the disability community in celebrating the settlement of David Weremy's class action lawsuit against the Government of Manitoba. This settlement paves the way for financial compensation and reconciliation initiatives for residents of the Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC). Many residents were forcibly confined and experienced abuse and neglect in the decades that the centre operated.

Today, a proposed settlement was finalized in a class-action lawsuit over abuse at the MDC. Filed in 2018 by People First of Manitoba member and national Task Force member David Weremy, the lawsuit will provide financial compensation to the victims of abuse and neglect at the MDC in Portage la Prairie.

"Today is a good day," says Task Force member and suit complainant David Weremy, "I worked hard. Nobody should ever live in an institution. They are bad places and people were hurt. I'm happy this case is over. I'm happy they're going to apologize. This is just as important as the money."

The settlement will include a public apology by the Government of Manitoba to survivors of MDC and reconciliation initiatives to rectify the abuse they suffered there.

"The settlement for the atrocities that happened at MDC is a form of atonement for the willful blindness of past and present governments in Manitoba," says family member Deb Roach, "My sister was 11 years old when our parents were forced to place her in MDC. For 16 months, she was badly hurt mentally and physically as a resident. Institutions are not the place for those who have done nothing wrong. In a democratic society, everyone shares blame."

The suit accompanies a 3-year plan announced in January 2021 to transition all residents of MDC to alternative supported living arrangements by March 31, 2024. Financial compensation and reconciliation initiatives are a step in the right direction, however, more must be done to stop the institutionalization of people with an intellectual disability in Canada once and for all.

The National Task Force on Deinstitutionalization is grateful to David Weremy for shining a light on the physical, mental and sexual abuse people experienced at the Manitoba Developmental Centre. While this is a victory, we are not done. We must continue working to ensure people with an intellectual disability take their rightful place as equal members of the community.

For more information, please contact:

Catherine Rodgers, Director of Communications
Email: crodgers@peoplefirstofcanada.ca
Phone: 709-690-1137

The [National Task Force on Deinstitutionalization](#) is a joint initiative from [People First of Canada](#) and [Inclusion Canada](#). The Task Force has two goals. The first is to close institutions that house people with intellectual disabilities. The second is to make sure people with intellectual disabilities and their families have the supports they need to live fully inclusive lives in the community.