

A Fact Sheet on **Support Services**

What is The Vulnerable Persons Living with A Mental Disability Act?

On October 4, 1996, a law came into force in Manitoba called *The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act*.

The Act was developed to promote and protect the rights of adults living with a mental disability who need assistance to meet their basic needs. The legislation recognizes these Manitobans as “vulnerable persons.”

The Act is based on the belief that vulnerable persons should have the opportunity to make their own decisions and direct their own lives, with support if necessary.

Who is eligible to receive support services?

Support services may be provided to vulnerable persons, within available resources. The Act defines a vulnerable person as an adult with a mental disability who needs assistance to meet his or her basic personal care or property management needs. Mental disability means a significant intellectual impairment plus impaired adaptive behavior, both having occurred before the age of 18 years. Persons meeting these conditions are eligible to receive support services.

What are support services?

Support services include a broad range of programs, services and supports that may be provided to vulnerable persons through The Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs. Besides the ongoing support that a community service worker provides, the following are some of the support services that may be available:

- **Residential Services**

Residential Services support vulnerable persons in a range of living options that provide varying levels of care and support. For example, a vulnerable person may live in a supported apartment living situation, a community residence or an approved private residential option in the community. As well, support may be available to assist vulnerable persons to live in their parental home, a foster home or independently.

- **Day Services and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program**

Day Services provides a range of options that respond to the vocational, social and personal care needs of vulnerable persons. The Day Services Program may support vulnerable persons in finding a job and in arranging for assistance they may need to do the job. Alternatively, when vulnerable persons need to learn work skills or life skills, Day Services can help them find appropriate resources.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program can help people living with a mental disability to plan for a job, get the training they need and obtain work in the competitive labour market.

Services of a generic nature may also be provided by organizations within the larger community.

How does a vulnerable person get support services?

The Act states that an individual plan must be developed for every vulnerable person who receives support services. Through the individual planning process, support services are identified. (For more information, see the Individual Planning fact sheet in this series.)

The planning process helps the vulnerable person to identify and move towards a desired future. The vulnerable person, members of that person's support network and the substitute decision maker or committee (if any) work with a community service worker to identify the person's strengths, needs and dreams for the future. The vulnerable person and the planning team can then begin to determine what services and supports are required. Services may include those provided through Manitoba Family Services and Housing as well as those available in the larger community. This process results in a written document called an individual plan.

What happens if persons are denied services or are not satisfied with the support services they are receiving?

If disputes arise about eligibility for service or about the support services provided to a vulnerable person, The Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs may appoint a mediator to try to settle the dispute.

Regardless of whether mediation is attempted, a vulnerable person, substitute decision maker or committee (if any) may appeal such disputes to the Social Services Appeal Board. Disputes that are not eligible for appeal are those involving increased funding or changes to policy.

Other fact sheets in this series:

- Supported Decision Making and Support Networks
- Individual Planning
- Protection
- Substitute Decision Making

Additional information:

For more information about *The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act*, contact your nearest regional office of The Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs or the Office of the Vulnerable Persons' Commissioner:

Northern

Thompson	(204) 677-6570
Flin Flon	(204) 687-1700
The Pas	(204) 627-8311

Parkland

Dauphin	(204) 622-2035
Swan River	(204) 734-3491

Eastman

Beausejour	(204) 268-6226
Steinbach	(204) 346-6390

Interlake (204) 785-5106

Westman (204) 726-6336

Toll Free: 1-800-230-1885

Central

Portage La Prairie	(204) 239-3092
Morden	(204) 822-2870

Winnipeg (204) 945-1335

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