



For Immediate Release

March 25, 2021

Human Rights Complaint Launched in British Columbia

Ready For My Shot founders have launched a **human rights complaint claiming discrimination** against British Columbians living with Down syndrome.

Ready For My Shot is a grassroots group of over 200 families and allies who are encouraging provincial governments to include people with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities on their COVID vaccine priority lists and roll-out plans.

The complaint notes that people with Down syndrome have increased vulnerability and experience medical frailty earlier in life. A study of 8 million UK residents found people with Down syndrome were almost 5 times as likely to be hospitalized, and 10 times more like to die from COVID as compared to the general population.

BC has prioritized people who work in non-essential industries such as ski resorts for the COVID vaccine before people with developmental disabilities who have been proven to be high-risk for contracting and dying from COVID.

'I want the vaccine so I can be healthy and active again.' - Max, Self-Advocate

"The BC government's vaccine roll-out plan is discriminatory," says Mike Waddingham, co-founder of Ready For My Shot and the father of a young man with Down syndrome. "The Human Rights Code requires the government to accommodate for disability. It must take into account the increased risk that people living with Down syndrome face from COVID-19 every day. Instead, BC is vaccinating workers in non-essential industries ahead of those citizens most in need."

On March 23, 2021, after over two months of lobbying by our members, British Columbia finally updated its policy to specifically identify people with developmental disabilities. Unfortunately, they have created an eligibility process that is tied to existing government programs, such as Community Living British Columbia, that is not inclusive of all citizens living with developmental disabilities.

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This 'gated' approach to vaccination presents an undue burden of proof for those most vulnerable and most in need of this essential health service. We assert that this is also discriminatory.

'I need the vaccine so I can go back to work.' - Tori, Self-Advocate

Waddingham continues: "The BC government's vaccine roll-out plan fails in its duties under the law. The government must cease this discrimination immediately."

We ask media outlets to consider covering this important and timely news item that has long-term consequences for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

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