

MEDIA RELEASE  
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## **British Columbians with intellectual disabilities dying 20 years earlier than other citizens**

### ***Special Olympics BC challenges all 2020 election candidates to commit to ending the deadly health inequality***

Thousands of British Columbians are needlessly facing premature death. Our province's citizens with intellectual disabilities are dying up to 20 years earlier than the general public. They experience two to three times more preventable hospitalizations, and suffer from dramatically higher rates of obesity, mental illness, over-medication, and poor oral health.

This is not because a person with an intellectual disability is inherently less healthy – but because of structural, social, and communication factors that stop them from getting the same level of health as everyone else. They're dying earlier because of things we can change.

People with intellectual disabilities have been severely marginalised, facing alarming health outcomes their whole lives. Now more than ever, with the added challenges of COVID-19, this needs to change. It can mean the difference between life and death.

It is time for B.C.'s elected officials to step forward and create essential and lasting change.

Special Olympics BC has issued a call to all candidates in the 2020 election to commit to engaging with people with intellectual disabilities and their supporters, to work together to end these deadly and unacceptable health conditions.

Now is the time for the Government of B.C. to lead the way to change the game for people with intellectual disabilities.

Will the electoral candidates commit to providing sufficient resources, and prioritizing change in our health system to ensure people with intellectual disabilities will no longer face inequality in health and in life?

Find more data and the candidates' responses:

<https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/2020-election>

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