



## NEWS RELEASE

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Auditor General questions government's approach to review of eligibility for disability assistance

VICTORIA — BC Auditor General Wayne Strelieff today released his report on the government's review of eligibility for disability assistance.

The Ministry of Human Resources conducted the review to confirm that former disability benefit recipients in British Columbia were still eligible to receive assistance under new legislation that took effect on September 30, 2002.

Strelieff concluded the ministry was legally required to ensure that benefits would be paid only to people meeting the revised eligibility conditions however, it moved too quickly in fulfilling that responsibility. "The ministry embarked on a fast-track review of all former disability benefit recipients before assessing whether the risk of paying benefits to ineligible recipients was high, and before fully examining other options for confirming eligibility."

The review, which cost government over \$5 million, found 400 (0.6%) of the ministry's 62,000 disabled clients were ineligible for continued assistance. This means the major cost savings the ministry expected the review to gain were not achieved. At the same time, the review created increased anxiety for many of the ministry's disabled clients.

Strelieff also reports that once the ministry decided on the type of review to carry out, it "did adequately manage the work and used reasonable and impartial methods to assess eligibility." As a result, legislators and taxpayers now have greater assurance that only eligible clients are receiving assistance.

Before government considers similar reviews in future, he added, risks should be thoroughly evaluated before decisions are made about how and when the work is to be done.

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2003/2004 Report #6: Audit of the Government's Review of Eligibility for Disability Assistance

[Download complete report in .PDF format](#) (size 4,626 KB)

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