

News Release

**Alleged Rights Abuse by B.C. Public Guardian and Trustee Highlights
Need for Personal Planning**

CBC news reports (July 9, 2009) of alleged abuse by British Columbia's Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) are a strong reminder of the importance of planning and accessing community-based resources if challenges arise.

In B.C., no one has the automatic right to manage your affairs if you are 19 years or older and become incapable of making your own decisions due to an accident, illness or disability. But you can make a legal plan to choose who will.

"Few people realize that a little effort now can save you money, time, and problems in the future", says Joanne Taylor, Executive Director of the Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre. "If you do not make a legal plan in advance, your affairs may be taken over by the PGT, and a spouse or family member might have to apply to court simply to help you manage your affairs."

Representation Agreements and Enduring Powers of Attorney can help you avoid guardianship and loss of rights. In B.C., these legally-binding planning tools ensure someone *you* trust has the legal authority to act on your behalf if you cannot speak for yourself. Representation Agreements are the only way to appoint someone to act on your behalf for health and personal care matters.

Having a legal plan in place eases the burden on loved ones and ensures your wishes are known and respected. It also means *you* stay in control and avoid the involvement of government or other authorities in your personal and private affairs. Given B.C.'s aging population, personal planning must become a priority.

At present, Nidus is the only community-based resource in Canada devoted to personal planning. Nidus is a non-profit, charitable organization that provides education and assistance to the public. Nidus helps representatives and attorneys understand their roles and responsibilities, and offers practical support if questions or problems arise.

"The reported cases of alleged abuse by the PGT reinforce the need for greater awareness about the legal tools available for personal planning and how to use them," says Taylor. "Personal planning is not just for seniors or end-of-life situations. Anyone can have a serious accident. Planning is about taking charge and preventing abuse."

This press release comes in response to a CBC news report published on July 9, 2009. To access the CBC article, please follow this link: <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2009/07/08/bc-public-guardian.html>
To view the PGT response, please see: http://www.trustee.bc.ca/news_information/news_main.htm

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Nidus is a non-profit, charitable organization. Nidus was established by citizens and community groups who helped create the Representation Agreement Act in 1993. Representation Agreements are an innovative legal tool, especially for addressing the critical needs of BC's aging population.

Find out how you can make a legal plan by contacting Nidus at 604-408-7414 or info@nidus.ca. Visit us on the web at www.nidus.ca to learn more about the benefits of making a legal plan and how to make and register a Representation Agreement and an Enduring Power of Attorney.