

Statement of Common Agenda on Disability, Full Participation & Work

In Canada today, many people live with recurrent or episodic disabilities that are characterized by alternating periods of illness and wellness. As stated in the Government of Canada response to the 2003 report *Listening to Canadians: A First View of the Canada Pension Plan Disability Program*: “recurrent and episodic disabilities are becoming more prevalent in Canadian society”.

There are many systemic and practical barriers which prevent people with episodic disabilities from participating in the labour force, in communities, and in society in a meaningful way.

People living with disabilities have a right to participate fully and equally in Canadian society. Adequate income is an integral part of full participation.

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Many people with disabilities rely on federal, provincial and private income support and replacement programs during periods when they are unable to participate fully in the workforce. However, certain aspects of these programs can act as disincentives to full participation.

In fact, the experience of many people with disabilities is that these programs trap them in poverty by creating barriers to staying on the job or returning to work. For people who live with episodic disabilities, this is especially true.

It is time that both public and private disability income support and replacement programs were reformed to meet the needs and aspirations of people living with disabilities.

We call upon the federal and provincial governments and private insurance companies to work with each other and with people living with disabilities to bring about long-overdue reform.

Signed,

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ ARCH: A Legal Resource Centre for Persons with Disabilities▪ Canadian Association of Nurses in AIDS Care▪ Canadian Association of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation▪ The Canadian Association of Rehabilitation Professionals▪ Canadian Breast Cancer Network▪ Canadian Cancer Society – Ontario▪ Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Canadian Mental Health Association▪ Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation (CWGHR)▪ COCQ-sida▪ Hepatitis C Society of Canada▪ Lupus Canada▪ Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada▪ Muscular Dystrophy Canada▪ Ontario Breast Cancer Research Initiative |
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