

Every Canadian Counts Coalition Newsletter



Volume 3, Issue 1

Here is our newsletter and update for purposes of stimulating discussion and decisions about next steps. ECC is the mouse that roared. Loud voice, no money! But as our friends in Australia remind us, the point is to keep going. We are doing that as I hope you will see.

KEY DEVELOPMENT

Responding to a question from Andria Spindel of March of Dimes at the the International Initiative on Disability Leadership Conference the Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities, Carla Qualtrough, stated that following the passage of the Accessibility Act the government will be looking to introducing something like the NDIS of Australia (see below).

The question for ECC, and us more broadly, is how we can all work and position ourselves to advance that agenda and, in doing so, find ourselves an important place in that new world.

This will be the focus of the next steps discussion below. Before that and by way of an update, recent developments for ECC include:

IIDL CONFERENCE: Attendance and engagement at the International Initiative on Disability Leadership (IIDL) Conference in Sydney Australia, February 27 - March 2.

Results as follows:

- Minister's Commitment (above)
- Contacts and relations established with NDIS senior administrators
- Presentations on NDIS operational issues and challenges in implementation



Minister Qualtrough, Bruce Bonyhady of the NDIS and William Cowie of ECC

STAFFING AND VOLUNTEERS: ***ECC CONTINUES TO GROW!***

David Newman: David is a senior and seasoned communication consultant who has volunteered to help us with communication strategy and substance. We hope to turn his volunteer time into paid time. We are very fortunate to have his interest and involvement.

Bruce Harber: Bruce is a Hospital and Health Care consultant specializing in regionalization, continuous quality improvement, utilization management, program management, community accountability, corporate/management/board restructuring, implementing the balanced scorecard in the private/public sector, developing accountability frameworks, and cultural transformation/capacity building in organizations. Bruce is assessing what role he can play on behalf of the ECC project/coalition.

Michael Kendrick: Michael Kendrick is a well known international consultant in human services and community work with a focus on work in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. His interests, involvements and writings have included leadership, service quality, the creation of safeguards for vulnerable persons, social integration, change, innovation, values, advocacy, the role of individual persons and small groups in creating advances. He is well known in the disability community in Canada.

Alex Cullen: Former Ontario MPP and City Counsellor, Alex has been an active with the disability community.

We welcome and look forward to Bruce, Mike, and Alex's participation as we engage Canadians in a discussion about a national disability support program.

Laura Heijdens: Laura is ECC's social media guru. A new mother (as of January), Laura is working reduced hours but keeping the ECC fire burning. Laura is working without remuneration at present but we hope to correct that.

Jess McCuaig: Jess may be known to many of you. Jess was the administrator for the Coalition at its beginning and was with us for some 18 months. Jess is the voice of the video on our website. Jess is returning and I hope will assume many of the responsibilities that William Cowie has handled over the past year. Again, it is the hope that this is in a paid position. Jess has continued her involvement with ECC in her absence overseas. We welcome the return of Jess.

NETWORKING ACTIVITIES & PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

SPDD-Discussions

The Social Development Partnerships Program-Disability of the federal government has been engaged in a stakeholder consultation process on program performance and accountability renewal. With an \$11.5 million budget it is divided into a grants and contribution component and a project component (about \$2 million). ECC has been positively engaged in these discussions which are on-going. (NOTE: Submissions for funding will be the fall of 2017 and ECC needs to be ready.)

Union Links

Apart from the IIDL Conference, the main networking efforts in recent weeks have been with the unions. Some, like NUPGE, were early supporters of ECC while others we have engaged with more recently including the Building Trades Union (500,000 members!), CUPW, and the Canadian Nursing Association. These contacts have been 'pushing up the chain' to the Canadian Labour Congress with some success. The Annual CLC Convention has a resolution supporting the creation of a national disability support program.

CUPW has agreed to translate our web presentation into French and they have committed \$1000 to help with advocacy work. These funds have been used to pay for an ECC booth at the upcoming Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs (OASIS) Conference.

ECC would like to give a special thanks to CUPW for their support.



Terry Mooney, ECC Secretary, meets with representatives of the Canadian Nursing Association

L'Arche

Terry Mooney, ECC Secretary, has renewed contacts with this organization and we look forward to further discussions.

Ability Centre Ottawa

The Ability Centre Ottawa is scheduled to be built at LeBreton Flats. ECC is in discussions on how to work together. It is part of the Ontario network of Ability Centres.

OASIS

ECC will be sponsoring a booth at the Annual Conference of the Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special needs (OASIS). OASIS is a long and early supporter of ECC. If you are in Ottawa come and help us at the booth (May 3-5)!

Rick Hansen Foundation

ECC attended the Accessibility Leadership Forum at the Rick Hansen Conference on December 1 in Toronto.

Kiwanis

A proposal to support ECC's research program is going to the Board of Kiwanis Ottawa.

High Tech in Ottawa

The recent federal budget created an Accessible Technology Development Fund. ECC is in negotiations with Ottawa's technology community to act as the funnel for the flow of funds of this program to them. In turn they would support our efforts at obtaining essential supports for people with disabilities. Stay tuned!

ANTI-POVERTY SUBMISSION

ECC submitted a position paper to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA, for short) in early March. Copies of the submission are [available on our website](#). Our thanks to Jess McCuaig for her contribution.

ACCESSIBILITY LEGISLATION

ECC contacted over 30 disability organizations asking them to consider a broad definition of accessibility in their submissions to government. This was to ensure that the door remained open to a national supports program following the passing of the Accessibility Act.

CURRENT ISSUES

Funding

The Canadian Revenue Agency rules make it very difficult for an advocacy organization to raise funds, especially when your base for raising funds are almost universally registered charities. For them giving funds to an advocacy groups could jeopardize their charitable status. There are indications that the federal government may lighten those rules.

It is also difficult to raise funds when so many organizations themselves have been through years of reduced funding – where survival has been precarious. Couple that with the fact that ECC is advocating for something no one had even heard of 4 years ago which would involve federal interventions that were deemed almost impossible given the prevailing philosophy of government just 18 months ago. Early and formative support by OASIS was supplemented after the first year by a small number of small contributions and private donations.

At the last ECC Board Meeting in February there was agreement to make fundraising a priority and a committee is being formed to that end. Effort will focus on raising funds for the Every Canadian Counts Project, an education and information project that is not advocacy work (see below).

In terms of funding applications, ECC is applying to the Trillium Fund under their Collective Impact Envelope. Importantly, ECC's work is modelled on the Collective Impact approach to resolving complex social problems; problems that are not easy to resolve, have persisted over time, and cannot be solved in isolation. A major challenge is bringing together and aligning organizations which have differing ages, resources, cultures, narratives, agendas, and often only address a few facets of a potential national disability support program. (See <http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/collectiveimpact> for a simple description of the rationale and components of Collective Impact.)

NEXT STEPS

1. Fundraising wherever we can (suggestions welcome).
2. Submission of the Trillium proposal by May.
3. Fund solicitation (ECC is engaged with Kiwanis Club, both Ottawa and national chapters).

Language & Terminology

The language used in our advocacy by way of describing ourselves and our constituency is a discussion that ECC has had internally.

In describing ourselves and our agenda our initial discussion points center around building enthusiasm and interest for and in the creation of a national disability support program. The funding of that program, we suggest, should take a universal insurance approach as this is the most robust and efficient. Some people found the notion of insurance difficult and we address it by saying it is like Medicare (indeed some have said, correctly, that what we are advocating for is 'some of the unfinished business of Medicare').

In recent SPPD-D discussions (noted above) some organizations have emphasized the role of 'consumer groups' as the focus of federal capacity building and project funding.

Given the nature of our advocacy efforts, ECC prefers to use the terms 'citizen and citizen groups' as it is the citizenry (tax paying and otherwise) with whom we must engage and convince. In addition, a national disability support program is not strictly a commercial (market) relationship (as suggested by the term 'consumer'). Rather it is part of the broader social contract – a relationship between the government and its citizenry in need.

Do we include Mental Health?

This has been a subject of discussion among members of the group. Canadians working on mental health issues showed very little interest when ECC engaged them. This is largely because their agenda is more fully developed and they have their own momentum. Also, only some

mental illnesses are chronic (our criteria) and our efforts at this stage would fragment their constituency. Including the mental health community at this stage would be premature.

Differentiating the Every Canadian Counts Coalition from the Every Canadian Counts Project

THE EVERY CANADIAN COUNTS COALITION

The Coalition is an advocacy group, lobbying governments, seeking organizational and individual supporters, and engaging unions, the faith community, and others in a mobilization effort. It is made up of a Board of Directors representing different disability groups. See the [ECC webpage](#) for a full description.

THE EVERY CANADIAN COUNTS PROJECT

The project, still at the conceptual/proposal stage, is an education and information project with a proposed budget of \$1.5 million to be spread over two years. The original proposal development which was created last fall was with in conjunction with 15 partner organizations. We are in the process of renewing those partnerships. To date we have 7 confirmations while others need to be contacted. Five of those have agreed to sit on the Project Steering Committee.

The project is structured in such a way that our partners assume a regional responsibility (e.g. OASIS in Ontario). Contact William Cowie at info@everycanadiancounts.com for more detail.

NEXT STEPS

1. Preparation of a project proposal for submission to SPPD-D in the fall of 2017.
2. Fill out membership of Steering Committee
3. Find other sources of funding