
NEWSLETTER Jan 2021

Item 1

Outline

Item 2

Opinion

Item 3

ECCC Fostering Inclusion

Item 4

Disability Insurance and Economic Recovery

Item 5

Board and Related News



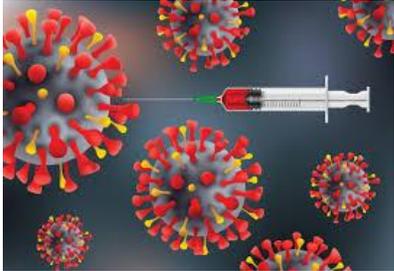
Every Canadian Counts Coalition

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Outline

Since our last Newsletter things have become worse on the COVID front in the short term, recent developments regarding vaccines helps us see an end. The biggest challenge in all this is the cultivation of patience, and finding ways to ameliorate economic hardship, disruption, and the accompanied loneliness and social isolation that may result. We at Every Canadian Counts wish you the best on all those fronts and hope our efforts offer you hope for the future.



Also, in our Opinion piece, we examine why the disability sector has not embraced the Medicare model. The answer is not simple but it rests on a fundamental misunderstanding, or misrepresentation, we believe, of what the Medicare system actually is.

Finally, we are also pleased to report active engagements with the Inclusion Agenda as participant, partner and lead on a number of different initiatives.



Finally, as part of the public consultation process on the budget the Every Canadian Counts Coalition has submitted a request to Present to the Finance Committee of the House of Commons as well as a Briefing Note to the Chair. We make the case for national disability insurance as one way to provide economic stimulus to the Canadian economy.



Opinion

The Inclusion Agenda: Why does the disability community not embrace Medicare?

Why does the disability community not embrace Medicare? The answer is both complex and simple. But one thing is clear, if the health advocacy community of the 1950's and 1960's had the culture, organization, and activist pre-occupations of the culture of the disability community in Canada today, we would never have had Medicare. Yet Canadians cherish their Medicare. Despite decades of assault on it, from attempts at privatization, to recent Supreme Court Rights challenges, this publicly funded universal, non means tested health care model enjoys the unequivocal support of the bulk of Canadians. So why the hostility from the disability community?

When you mention Medicare as something that may be desirable for persons with disabilities, is there a shudder, a 'oh we don't want that' response. It seems to boil down to a fear often expressed of being 'medicalized'. What is meant by that? A complex notion in itself, I believe it has to do at its heart with the medical approach seeing its patients/clients, as being the object of interventions, as objects to be 'fixed' (made better) – an objective that runs counter to the narrative, which I have addressed elsewhere, that 'people don't need fixing, society does'. Without getting too much into the different aspects of the term 'medicalization' the overall objection to Medicare coming from this vantage point is in the way Medicare interventions are offered. In short, the objections to Medicare for advocates for persons with disabilities seems to be in the way Medicare is *delivered*.

But there is a fundamental problem. Medicare was not conceived as a delivery system. That system was already in place when it was created. Rather, Medicare was conceived as a funding system, a way of paying for medical services. It was an insurance-based model of funding.

How did it work? In the words of Tommy Douglas, the founder of Medicare in Saskatchewan, “You go to your Doctor (or hospital), and instead of the bill going to you it goes to the government.” It is paid for out of public funds where the premiums for the insurance are generated through the national tax system. This was universally accepted because everyone would benefit and because everyone’s basic health needs would be paid for. That is Medicare.

Every Canadian Counts has been advocating for an insurance-based funding system for persons with disabilities along very much the same lines as Medicare. It is in recognition that in the delivery of such funded services will have the distinct mark and character and priorities (values) the embody the disability support system today. As with Medicare’s creation in the 1950’s and 60’s the funding will not only go to support the current system, but also work to improve it because the resources and oversight will be available to produce quality outcomes while generating considerable efficiencies.

Disability activists since de-institutionalization began have tackled all sorts of problems facing persons with disabilities: housing, employment, education, inclusion, but they have all done it from their partial corners. Advocacy has taken place in a culture of competitive fragmentation, with no coming together to address the problem that faces them all – chronic underfunding. This is not by accident, it has been cultivated, and it has served minimalist government agendas well. Recent governments do not want a repeat of the medical advocacy of the 1950’s and 60’s and it is time to change that.

At the same time, in the pursuit of adequate funding, we must keep in mind that it must meet the aspirations of the disability community. In other words, there needs to be some basic principles of operationalization/support that the community can accept and that makes the funding meaningful.

ECCC would suggest some (negotiable) guiding principles:

1. Designed to fill the disability supports gap in Canada's social safety net.
2. Aims to remove barriers to the full social, economic, and cultural participation of individuals living with disabilities and their families.
3. Reframes disability support as an economically responsible investment rather than charity.
4. Focuses on early intervention and sustained support to produce better long-term outcomes.
5. Relieves families of unpaid care work and of being primarily responsible for providing disability supports to loved ones.
6. Offers person-centred funding.
7. Covers cost of regular care, support, therapy, equipment, residential needs, and training (personal care, life skills, employability).
8. Provides choice to individuals and families in regards to how funding for supports is managed (indirect vs. direct funding).
9. Offers equitable levels of support to individuals with a similar type/severity of disability no matter where they live.
10. Available to all Canadians who are born with or acquire a long-term disability.
11. Disability supports must be distinguished and separate from income supports and non-substitutable. Disability supports should not be subject to means testing.

All these principles, and others are open for discussion. But in the end, it is time for the disability community to get together around the one issue that faces them all – chronic underfunding. The rest will follow.

ECCE: Fostering Inclusion

We are pleased to report that we have established two new partnerships advancing the agenda of Inclusion. One is the **Rising Youth** initiative and the other is the **Disability Confidence Impact on Finance**.

Rising Youth

Rising Youth (<https://www.risingyouth.ca/>) Rising Youth is a program led by TakingITGlobal to help youth build Canada and develop life skills by giving back to their communities. Created for youth by youth, they are building a program to increase involvement through community service. The program is currently funded to offer grants through March 2021 with the funds coming from the Government of Canada under the Canada Service Corps initiative.



The Every Canadian Counts Coalition was asked to lead in youth outreach to those who have a disability after which we engaged 26 different organizations and individuals many of whom applied. In a note to ECCE one of the Rising Youth organizers, Christina Muia noted that, *“I am happy to say that we have disbursed almost all of our grants - and it was very much thanks to partners like you that we were able to do so”*.

Disability Confidence Impact on Finance



As noted in the previous Newsletter a project, entitled “Disability Confidence” (DC), a concept and approach employed in New Zealand, will develop tools and resources pertaining to the Canadian financial sector and focus on the priority areas of accessible service design/delivery and accessible workplaces as they relate to

the Accessible Canada Act. It includes the development and launching of an online toolkit specifically designed for the Canadian financial sector, featuring products, guidance, and services designed to promote the Accessible Canada Act while also meeting the talent needs of the sector.

ECCC will spend an average of two hours/week on project-related activities that may include providing feedback and input, attending meetings, and promoting the overall project to the community at large.

The project now has its management team in place and ECCC is scheduled to meet with them to discuss work plans/responsibilities and reporting. The Every Canadian Coalition looks to this program as a way of establishing what in the disability and employment sphere would be considered ‘essential supports’ for purposes of insurance funding.



Disability and Work Conference

This Conference was held November 25-26 | December 1-2, 2020 with ECCC participating as an ‘On-Demand’ participant and attendee. Our video for the conference, presented by Board Member Jonathan Marchand is available here:

https://dwconference.unityvirtualevent.com/ondemand-presentations/?uww_sessid=12a1fe20-e72f-46d8-9b93-f5e4d27f22e9

PLAN Canada and the Canadian Disability Benefit

The Every Canadian Counts Coalition participated in PLAN Canada’s “Building momentum for the Canadian Disability Benefit – A Learning Series”. In its input into the discussion ECCC emphasized then distinction between income support and disability supports and that one should not mix with the other – that they must be

kept separate as policy initiatives. This is to avoid ‘means testing’ for disability supports and ensuring that income support does not go to needed disability supports thereby undermining income effects of any GI program.

PLAN Canada has a number of on-lines session coming up in the winter n the RDSP, Estate Planning, and Personal Support Network Facilitation. For further information visit their website at:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/2/?tab=wm&ogbl#label/ECC%2Faaa%2FPLAN/FMfcgxwKjnSvWkdfLQfGNkrCMDKvjFDx>



Stories Project

As noted in the last Newsletter, Every Canadian Counts Coalition has launched a **Stories Project**. Based on a Stories Report out of Australia called the *Shut Out Report*, it was instrumental in making the Australian public aware of the marginalizes, difficult and precarious lives of persons with disabilities. With that public awareness support for a disability insurance program exploded. We believe such a public discourse needs to happen among Canadians. We care also aware however there is stories fatigue among the community of persons with disabilities. They have been told many times – all over the place.

Much of the job then, looking ahead, is to gather the stories that have already been told. So if you have any documented stories, please let us know by contacting our coordinator Hubert van Niekerk at info@everycanadiancounts.com.

Disability Insurance and Economic Recovery

Finance Committee

The Every Canadian Counts Coalition is working to get a funding commitment to start launching a national disability insurance strategy in the next federal budget. All indications are that this will be a reform budget, one that will attempt to address the many gaps and weaknesses that emerged from the trauma that has been this pandemic.

In that effort the Coalition has submitted a Request to Present to the Clerk of the Finance Committee where we outlined the case for insurance as an effective way to help with the economic recovery. Unfortunately, those consultations ended, despite efforts to continue, but the information will be included in the Committee's review and recommendations. In addition, The Coalition has submitted a Briefing Note to the Chair of the Finance Committee outlining the case in another way for disability insurance as an economic stimulus¹.

Furthermore, it is totally in line and supports the Government's Inclusion Agenda which was outlined in the last Throne Speech. That agenda called for a new Canadian Disability Benefit modelled after the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors; a robust employment strategy for Canadians with disabilities and, a better process to determine eligibility for Government disability programs and benefits.

Why do we say disability insurance would be an effective economic stimulus? We have proof. The following is part of a letter written to ECCC from Bruce

¹ To view the Briefing Note see: https://everycanadiancounts.com/?page_id=72 (Archives)

Bonyhady, the founder of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Australia and its first Executive Director. It stated:

The foundation work on the NDIS was undertaken by Australia's Productivity Commission in 2010 and 2011. In its report, the Productivity Commission estimated that the introduction of the NDIS would add nearly 1 per cent to Australia's GDP and that the benefits would exceed the costs. In broad terms, the NDIS is adding around 0.5 per cent to disability spending, so the multiplier is approximately two and this largely arises through forecast increased employment of people with disability.

In addition, through the build-up of the NDIS, from the end of the 'trial period' in mid-2016, through to the full-scheme, it was estimated that the NDIS would contribute about 20 per cent of the new jobs created in Australia, with a much higher contribution to employment growth in regional, rural and especially remote communities. This has obviously been disrupted by the COVID – 19 pandemic, but nevertheless the NDIS has been a very significant source of employment growth in Australia.

Overall, the NDIS is a job creator as well as a major contributor to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers.

The creation of a publicly funded national disability insurance program not only creates jobs and strengthens the economy, but also addresses poverty and housing, fosters inclusion and stimulates innovation. Not mentioned in the letter was the employment effects for women, as many are able to rejoin the workforce as the care needs of the family were met.

Board News

New Board Member

We are pleased to welcome Hubert Van Niekerk to the Board of the Every Canadian Counts Coalition.



Hubert has been involved with the Ontario Association for Developmental Education for 16 years as Member-at-Large, President and past president. Currently a Member at Large at the present Hubert started their Twitter account in 2014 and continue to look after that account (@oade14). Hubert has brought the National Insurance Plan and the ECC to their attention which was very well received.

In addition, Hubert has been a member of:

- the Council for Exceptional Children, London Middlesex (former president). Co-chaired a conference and presented to school boards and a university;
- L'Arche London - board of directors. In addition, as Advisor to the Board Hubert assisted in coordinating and working on their construction projects.

At the age of 48 Hubert went to university to become a teacher whereafter he taught special education in a mostly self contained classroom for 16 years working with students that had multiple gifts and challenges. Hubert did a one year teaching work exchange in Australia. These followed after several years working in construction and management.

Hubert is happily married to Rosemary for 48 years, and has 3 adult children and 6 grandchildren.

On a lighter note. The picture of Hubert shows the car that plowed into his house! His carpentry/construction skills have come in handy.

Reminder: Our New Website

Please visit our new and updated website at www.everycanadiancounts.com

Our message is a simple one. We need a new national funding formula for disability services that provides essential supports for persons with chronic disabilities throughout their lifetime regardless of income. We do it for people facing health challenges, it is time to offer the same for those who face the challenges of a disability.