

World Autism Awareness Day: Nova Scotia Autism Support Groups Call Government to Action

For immediate release

Halifax, Nova Scotia – March 26, 2008

On December 18, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution designating April 2nd as World Autism Awareness Day - a UN Day to be observed every year starting in 2008. Resolution 62/139 **World Autism Awareness Day** encourages UN Member States to take measures to raise world-wide awareness about autism and to promote early diagnosis, early intervention and necessary services for individuals with ASD and their families.

World Autism Awareness Day will shine a light on autism as a growing global health crisis. Autism Society Nova Scotia along with the Valley Autism Support Team and Autism Society of Cape Breton will be marking this historic day to help to increase and develop world knowledge of autism.

The incidence rate of autism is as high as 1/150. In Nova Scotia there are approximately 6100 individuals living with autism. Many individuals with autism have very high lifespan needs requiring intervention and support from government services. As the numbers of persons with autism increase in the province, Autism Support groups in the province are concerned the impact will be felt in all areas of social supports in Nova Scotia.

On November 6, 2007, following a presentation from Autism Society Nova Scotia, Valley Autism Team and Autism Society Cape Breton, the Nova Scotia Legislative Standing Committee on Community Services adopted the following motion:

‘That the Province create a Working Group of Health, Education and Community Services professionals, including parents and advocates to be determined by Autism Society Nova Scotia, who can investigate the scope of issues surrounding the Autism Community and produce a report that develops and implements a plan that addresses the intervention, support and accommodation needs across the lifespan of individuals living with and affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

This motion was subsequently forwarded to the NS Cabinet. To date there is no indication any action has been taken towards establishing this working group. **ASNS, VAST and ASCB call to the NS government to rise to the UN’s worldwide challenge for governments to improve and promote the programs and services individuals with autism and their families require.**

We urge the NS Government to reveal their strategy for addressing the needs of Nova Scotians affected by autism.

Autism Society Nova Scotia, Valley Autism Support Team and Autism Society Cape Breton are non-profit organizations committed to support individuals with autism, their families and friends.



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