

February 17<sup>th</sup> 2009

On the eve of President Obama's visit to Canada, Autism Society Canada wishes to remind our Federal Government that together we have an opportunity to take a leadership role in building a ***National Autism Strategy*** for Canada. Autism Society Canada is urging all Members of Parliament to recognize that Autism Spectrum Disorders ("ASD") are indeed a national priority that need to be addressed. With an Agenda released only two days after taking office, President Obama has shown a **strong commitment** to supporting Americans living with an ASD, their families, and their communities!

President Obama's commitment to Autism was outlined with the following four simple steps

- First, President Obama and Vice President Biden support increased funding for autism research, treatment, screenings, public awareness, and support services. There must be research of the treatments for, and the causes of, ASD.
- Second, President Obama and Vice President Biden support improving life-long services for people with ASD for treatments, interventions and services for both children and adults with ASD.
- Third, President Obama and Vice President Biden support funding the Combating Autism Act and working with Congress, parents and ASD experts to determine how to further improve federal and state programs for ASD.
- Fourth, President Obama and Vice President Biden support universal screening of all infants and re-screening for all two-year-olds, the age at which some conditions, including ASD, begin to appear. These screenings will be safe and secure, and available for every American that wants them. Screening is essential so that disabilities can be identified early enough for those children and families to get the supports and services they need.

As the national umbrella organization of provincial and territorial societies, Autism Society Canada has been acting as a collective national voice for the autism community in Canada for almost 33 years.

Autism Society Canada welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with Canada's Federal Government to outline a National Autism Strategy for the benefit of families and individuals affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). National leadership and commitment to ASD issues is absolutely vital in order to bring equal access to targeted health, education and social services for all Canadians living with an ASD. (See attached)

Let's make Autism a priority in Canada. Together, we can build a ***National Autism Strategy*** that includes innovative funding for universal screening, surveillance, research, treatment, supports and services across the lifespan.

Sincerely,



Christine Dade  
President