



Autism Society Canada
Société canadienne de l'autisme

The Largest Canadian Collective Voice of the Autism Community Calls on the Federal Government to Improve Treatment, Services and Support

For immediate release

February 23, 2005 Ottawa – People with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and their families need the government of Canada to take a leadership role to ensure that people with ASDs reach their full potential as participating members of their communities.

There are over 190,000 individuals with ASDs in Canada and it is estimated that one in every 200 children is born with an autism spectrum disorder. “On budget day, we ask the federal government to put in place the infrastructure and resources **now** so we can begin to address the multi-faceted needs of our community,” said ASC President Peter Zwack. In some regions of Canada, treatment and other essential services for people with ASDs are non-existent. Families are forced to relocate to another province in order to obtain essential treatment. In other regions, unacceptable wait lists deprive children of scientifically validated early intervention treatment. “In Canada, we have a national Medicare system which should be providing accessible no-cost treatment. People with ASDs have the right to treatment and required services,” Zwack added. Today, parents and other supporters gather on Parliament Hill to draw attention to the lack of government support for children with autism.

Autism Society Canada calls on the government to:

- Increase funding to provinces and territories to provide critical no-cost treatment, education, professional training, required supports and accommodations for Canadians with ASDs
- Mandate the Public Health Agency of Canada to make autism a national priority by initiating surveillance and reporting, and setting much-needed national standards for treatment and service delivery
- Allocate significant funds targeted for ASDs research to Canadian funding organizations such as CIHR.
- Improve financial and other supports to people with disabilities and their families through the federal tax and labour systems
- Create an all-party parliamentary committee on autism

ASC is a federation of Canada-wide provincial and territorial autism societies whose collective memberships represent the largest body of individuals affected by ASDs and their families in Canada. ASC has been serving the autism community since 1976.

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