



**Autism Society Canada**  
**Société canadienne de l'autisme**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Canadian Autism Research and Strategy Agendas released in White Paper  
from Autism Society Canada**

**Ottawa, Ontario, June 1, 2004**

A Canadian Autism Research Agenda and Strategy have been released in a *White Paper* from Autism Society Canada (ASC). The autism situation in our country is alarming – reported cases have risen by 150% in six years, and there is evidence that at least one in every 200 Canadian children has a form of autism. The Canadian Autism Research Agenda's priority research goal is improving outcomes for people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and their families. In addition, it focuses on 19 priority autism research areas, involvement of all stakeholders and the international research community, information tracking, knowledge translation and targeted autism research funding. The Canadian Autism Strategy highlights advocacy for national leadership from Health Canada in acknowledgement of the Canadian autism situation. As well it underlines the urgent need for adequate funds for autism research and autism related intervention, services and supports; national and international ASD related communication and information collection; adoption of best practices in all jurisdictions; and response to emerging issues.

Leading Canadian autism researchers, provincial and federal government health officials, related professional organizations, autism societies and research funding agencies participated in ASC's Canadian Autism Research Workshop (CARW), which had the lead sponsorship of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the National Alliance for Autism Research (NAAR). Prominent North American researchers addressed the state of Canadian and international autism research. Presentations by families affected by autism and people with Autism Spectrum Disorders were also included. The *White Paper* is the culmination of this important workshop.

The Canadian Autism Research Agenda and Strategy focus on the critical need for design and implementation of integrated health services: better screening, diagnostic, assessment and treatment procedures, and the identification of risk factors associated with ASD. Research in intensive early intervention needs to be coupled with the development of best treatment practices, including improved life-span treatment models. These services must be designed to include individual and family support and take into account individual and family differences.

As well as serving as an action plan to promote the increase and enhancement of autism research in Canada, the *White Paper* provides information on current autism research in Canada, funds available to Canadian autism researchers, and data regarding Canadian and American autism research funding levels are highlighted. Although Canada has seen the total amount of autism research funding more than double in the past three years, the amount of public funding available for autism related research on a per capita basis is only one-fifth that of the United States.

The *White Paper* is a mobilizing tool to address the needs of Canadians with Autism Spectrum Disorders, their families, communities and governments. It will be submitted to Canadian federal, provincial and territorial government officials, universities, hospitals, national organizations, research funding agencies as well as agencies and organizations that depend on autism research to guide their service and support provision.

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**For the complete report online, go to [www.autismsocietycanada.ca](http://www.autismsocietycanada.ca) and follow the links.**