

ISSN 0835-6165

COMMUNIQUÉ

**A publication of the
Premier's Council on the
Status of Disabled Persons**



Spring Edition 2010

Telephone: (506) 444-3000 or 1-800-442-4412

Fax: (506) 444-3001

E-mail: pcsd@gnb.ca

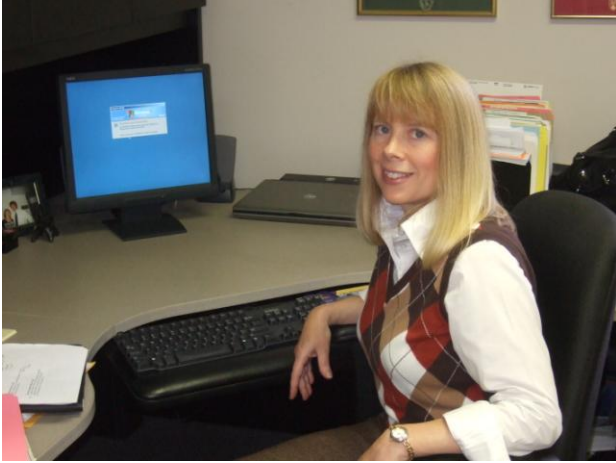
Website: www.gnb.ca/council

Ce bulletin est disponible en français!

Table of Contents

Chairperson’s Message.....	1
Executive Director’s Message.....	1
Q&A with new Assistant Executive Director, Lui Greco.....	2
Canada’s benefits finder for persons with disabilities	3
Update to the Poverty Reduction Plan Strategy	4
The Interim Assistance Rate eliminated	4
Extended Health Card	4
Changes to Household Income Policy	4
Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Update.....	5
N.B. Disability Awareness Week 2010.....	5
What’s new with the PCSDP website!.....	6
“Respect the Sign or Expect a Fine” pamphlets.....	7
<i>72-Hour Emergency Preparedness Guide</i>	7
Spring & Summer Safety Tips	8
PCSDP Information directories.....	10

Chairperson's Message



My first year as Chairperson of the Premiers Council on the Status of Disabled Persons has indeed been a very fast paced and enjoyable one - working with council members and staff, numerous organizations and agencies, and persons with disabilities toward the realization of the full inclusion of individuals with a disability within our Province.

Since our last newsletter, a definite highlight and significant milestone occurred on December 3rd with the public release of *Status Report #2 on the Disability Action Plan Strategy-The Path to Self-Sufficiency and Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick*. Identifying equality and full citizenship, inclusion (equity of opportunity), empowerment and self-determination, rights and responsibilities, and assured support for basic needs as guiding values and principles, this comprehensive document will serve as an extremely valuable resource as we monitor the status of progress made within the 100 recommendations identified within the report.

Disability Awareness Week will be held throughout New Brunswick from May 30th to June 5th this year, incorporating the very fitting slogan "Yes we can!". With 2010 marking the 23rd consecutive annual Disability Awareness Week celebration to be held within the province, I would like to encourage everyone to join in their local community events, activities, and celebrations.

Over the course of 2010, I very much look forward to another productive and rewarding year as Chairperson of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons, as we all work together toward the achievement of full citizenship for all.

"Will is power." – *French Proverb*

Executive Director's Message



This past December, the Council released the *Status Report #2 - Responses to date on the Recommendations from the Disability Action Plan Strategy – The Path to Self-Sufficiency and Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick*.

On March 17, the NB Energy and Utilities Board held formal meetings regarding elimination of intercity bus service between Fredericton to Miramichi and Saint John to Bangor. The council expressed its concern that these cuts, if implemented, would have a negative impact on persons with disabilities living in Charlotte and Northumberland counties. A significant number of persons with disabilities do not have ready access to their own transportation. Eliminating affordable and accessible transportation options will create new barriers for an estimated population of 13,000. A decision from the EUB is expected early in the second quarter of 2010.

There have been some changes to the Household Income policy. Recipients of social assistance who are not in a spousal relationship will no longer have their benefits impacted if they are sharing accommodations. For persons with disabilities, this opens up possibilities for improved living conditions as they are no longer forced to live on their own. This change announced in February is part of the government's poverty reduction strategy.

The Council has been involved in many other issues and continues to work closely with government departments, municipalities and nonprofit organizations in its ongoing work to move New Brunswick closer to becoming an inclusive province with every citizen having equal opportunities and responsibilities. More information on the services offered by the council are available at www.gnb.ca/council or by calling toll free 1-800-442-4412 or e-mail at pcsd@gnb.ca.

“The biggest problem in the world could have been solved when it was small.” – *Witter Bynner*

Q&A with the new Assistant Executive Director, Lui Greco

- 1. How did you get involved with the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons?***



When I first moved to New Brunswick in 1999, I wanted to connect with other persons living with a disability. My experience has always reinforced that if people with a common goal and like experience work together, everyone comes out ahead.

- 2. How did you first become involved in the disability community?***

I have been blind all my life. As such, I have regularly accessed services and participated in various activities and programs. Although I have many interests outside the disability community, being involved and supporting various events or programs has always been a big part of who I am and how I spend my time.

3. *Having a disability yourself, what types of on-going challenges would you like to see addressed?*

Where to begin. Things have changed dramatically since I was old enough to understand what life as a person who is blind would be like. Undoubtedly, the biggest change is the impact that technology has had. Affordable computers, screen reading technology for under \$1,500 were all pie in the sky in 1979 when I began university. Our place in society has changed dramatically with more and more people with disabilities being represented in all kinds of professional/life roles.

Having said that though, some things still haven't changed. Attitudes remain the biggest hurdle we still need to overcome. Misconceptions about the abilities of someone who is blind are still very prevalent. In fact, over the past year I've have encountered situations reticent of 35 years ago; what do you mean you are blind, you can't do that.... Despite this mind set, every day I meet people who are more than eager to work with and include persons of all abilities

4. *What are some positive developments that you have been involved with over the years that you're most pleased about?*

Undoubtedly, the Internet.

5. *What do you like best about working with the disability community?*

The opportunity to positively impact others, bring about change that will benefit other people with disabilities and most importantly of all, the opportunity to meet some really inspirational people.





Canada's benefits finder for persons with disabilities

Click on the following link and answer some questions to get a personalized list of benefits for which you may be eligible:

<http://www.canadabenefits.gc.ca/f.1.2cw.3z.1rdq.5.2st.3.4ns@.jsp?lang=eng&geo=7>

Update to the Poverty Reduction Plan Strategy

It has been just about four months since the Final Forum was held and the *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan* was adopted. The first progress report has been released on what has been realized through the poverty reduction plan to improve the quality of life and social inclusion of New Brunswick's most vulnerable citizens.

Some key points:

1. The Interim Assistance Rate eliminated:

On January 18, 2010 it was announced that social assistance clients who qualified for the Interim Assistance Program rate as of January 1, 2010 now qualify for benefits under the Transitional Assistance Program. This means that these clients will benefit from an 82% increase in their monthly cheque. The Transitional Assistance Program provides financial assistance to persons and families who have the potential to become self-sufficient once certain barriers to employment have been addressed.

More information found at www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fcs/2010e0061sd.htm

2. Extended Health Card:

On December 9, 2009 a change in policy was made to extend the health card provided to social assistance clients for up to 3 years after they leave social assistance for a job. The benefit was previously good for up to 12 months for clients leaving social assistance. This extension means clients can renew their benefit up to 36 months. This will eliminate a barrier to employment and ease the transition to work for social assistance recipients while the new Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation considers ways of extending prescription drug coverage to all New Brunswickers.

More information found at www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fcs/2009e1956sd.htm

3. Changes to the Household Income Policy:

On February 17, 2010 improvements were made to the Household Income Policy under the social assistance system. The modifications mean that clients who were in receipt of social assistance on January 1, 2010 and who are in non-spousal relationships will be able to share accommodations with clients or non clients and receive separate cheques. This policy has been a long-time barrier for many social assistance clients who are struggling to achieve self-sufficiency and improve their financial situation. This is an interim measure that will help current clients economically until a complete overhaul of the social assistance system is completed.

More information found at www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/fcs/2010e0232sd.htm

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons will continue to monitor and inform its contacts of the changes under the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

“We don't ask a flower to give us any special reasons for its existence. We look at it and we are able to accept it as being something different and different from ourselves.” – *Gwendolyn Brooks*

Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Update

The Government of Canada's Budget 2010 proposed changes to the *Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)*, the *Canada Disability Savings Grant* and the *Canada Disability Savings Bond*. The proposed changes will provide Canadians with disabilities and their families with more flexibility when saving for the future.

Proposed amendments include a 10-year carry forward of grant and bond entitlements. Budget 2010 also proposes to allow a rollover of a deceased individual's Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) and Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) proceeds into the RDSP of a financially dependent child or grandchild with a disability.

For more details, please visit:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/disability_savings/budget.shtml

“Life offers no obstacles, only challenges.” –
Author Unknown

N.B. Disability Awareness Week 2010



Recently we held our annual Information Session with updates for this year's Disability Awareness Week activities.

There will be a number of activities, media spots, contests, promotional items and special events undertaken to help celebrate the annual N.B. Disability Awareness Week leading up to May 30th – June 5th.

Some of this year's contests include:

- LEO Scooter Give-Away Contest (deadline May 21st)
- DAISY Talking Book Reader Contest (deadline May 21st)
- Quiz Contest (deadline May 21st)
- Registered Events Contest (prize draw June 4th)

The 2010 Kick-Off will be held on May 29th from 1:00-3:00pm. It will be hosted by the Independent Living – Péninsule Acadienne (Vie Autonome Péninsule Acadienne Inc.) at the Piscine régionale Shippagan, at the Université de Moncton-Shippagan. For more information please contact Ghislain Doiron, Executive Director at (506) 336-1305, or email info@cvapa.ca.

Keep checking our website for more details about DAW by going to the Premier's Council website at www.gnb.ca/council and clicking the link to the Disability Awareness Week webpage.

What's New with the PCSDP Website!

We've recently updated our website with some very useful information!

In an effort to cut down on the amount of emails we send from our office, we have created a new webpage titled "Community Events Calendar" which lists the upcoming disability related events taking place. The link titled "Community Events Calendar" can be found on the main page of our website on upper the left hand side. If you have a disability related event that you wish to have added please contact our office toll-free at 1-800-442-4412 or by email to pcsdp@gnb.ca for more details.



We've also added another link with information of disability related items for sale. The link is also located on the left hand side in the "Other Useful Information" section. The information provided has been submitted to us by consumers or non-profit groups looking to part with disability related items. If you have any items that you wish to have added please contact our office.

We have some more website updates in the works so keep visiting our website at www.gnb.ca/council to see the new information!

“We cannot make it rain, but we can see to it that the rain falls on prepared soil.” – *Henri Nouwen*

Spring & Summer Safety Tips

Now that Spring is here we wanted to remind the public of some basic safety tips to keep in mind:

- **Bicycle & skateboarding safety:** Always wear a helmet. Make sure helmet fits correctly and has a CPSC or Snell sticker inside. These indicate that the helmet meets standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or the Snell Memorial Foundation, a nonprofit group that tests helmet safety. Pick bright coloured clothing easily visible to vehicles. If skateboarding, always ensure that you have proper pads on elbows and knees.
- **Scooter/wheelchair/power wheelchair safety:** Scooters, wheelchairs and power wheelchairs should **ALWAYS** be driven on the sidewalk and not the road. Under the *Motor Vehicle Act of New Brunswick* such users of disability wheelchair mobility devices are legally considered to be pedestrians and must follow the same rules as other pedestrians on foot. If driven on the road, it is **extremely dangerous** for both the pedestrian and vehicle driver. For more information please visit our website at www.gnb.ca/council and click on the *Important Safety Notice* in the “Resource Material” section of our website.
- **Sun safety:** Use a sunscreen that offers UVA and UVB protection and that has a SPF of at least 15 or higher (especially if the person has light skin). Apply sunscreen 30-45 minutes before going outside. Limit exposure to sun when it’s at its strongest (10am-4pm). Keep hydrated. Know that DEET lowers the effectiveness of sunscreens, so use a higher SPF if you are using a combination product that has both a sunscreen and an insect repellent. Wear a hat, cover up with long sleeve shirt and long pants and protect eyes with sunglasses.



- **Water safety:** Always wear a safety approved life jacket when on a lake, river or ocean while boating, water skiing, jet skiing or tubing. Do not let children play around any water (lake, pool, ocean, etc.) without adult supervision. Keep toys away from pools to prevent a child from falling in. Have a telephone close by to avoid leaving children unattended. Keep rescue equipment handy.

- Extension cords & air conditioners: The inappropriate use of extension cords is a major cause of home fires. Before setting up your air conditioner for another season, have a qualified electrician install a new outlet if necessary. Remember that extension cords are temporary fixes — it is dangerous to use them as a permanent substitute for inadequate house wiring.

- Firing up the grill: Whether you use a propane or natural gas barbecue, keep safety in mind. Before starting the unit, check all the connections to make sure they are tight.



Then, check for leaks by applying a mixture of soap and water to the hoses and gas cylinder head — growing bubbles indicate a leak. And before lighting the grill, remember to open the lid so gas can't build up underneath it. Never hold a match or cigarette lighter over the grill: the quick ignition is sure to cause serious burns. Never barbecue in an enclosed space and keep children away from a hot grill.

- Call before you dig: One phone call can make the difference. Be sure to call before you dig. When planning to drill a well, dig post holes for a fence or plant some trees or bushes plan ahead to call for clearances. Don't wait until work is under way. Call well in advance to get the information you need to do the job safely. Call to check your property to make sure it is safe to dig.

Here are some useful numbers to call:

- Bell Aliant: 1-800-332-3333
- NB Power: 1-800 663-6272
- Rogers: 1-800-738 7893
- Enbridge Gas: 1-800-994-2762
- Enbridge Gas - Saint John: 1-866-344-5463
- Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline: 1-888-444-6677 (outside of Saint John, NB)
- Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline: 1-866-344-5463 (within Saint John, NB)
- Irving Oil: 1-888-310-1924
- Saint John Energy: 1-866-344-5463 (1-866-DIG-LINE)

- Brunswick Pipeline: 1-888-410-2220
- Heritage Gas: 1-866-313-3030

Be active but be safe!

PCSDP Information Directories

Just a reminder that the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons has a wide variety of disability related directories available at no charge:



- *Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick*
- *Directory of Financial Aid for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick*
- *Transportation Directory for Persons with Disabilities and Seniors*
- *Directory of Career Counselling and Job Placement Services*
- *Directory of Financial Assistance for Students with Disabilities*
- *Sources of Funding Assistance and/or Rehabilitation Equipment Loan Programs*
- *Funding Sources for Barrier-Free Access*
- *The Vehicle Retrofit Programs and Mobility Access Programs*

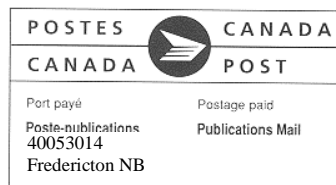
These directories can be found online at www.gnb.ca/council.

If you’re having trouble finding the information that you’re looking for or have any disability related question, please don’t hesitate to contact us at 1-800-44-4412 or email pcsdp@gnb.ca.

“Take the tools in hand and carve your own best life.” – *Douglas Lurton*



Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons
440 King Street, Suite 648, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H8
Telephone: (506) 444-3000 or 1-800-442-4412
Fax: (506) 444-3001
E-mail: pcsdp@gnb.ca
Website: www.gnb.ca/council
Editor: Christyne Allain
Layout/Design: Kristin Colwell



We welcome submissions for our newsletter on any topic relative to persons with disabilities. This newsletter can be available in alternate formats. Please circulate the Communiqué within your office and with friends.



NOTICE

The recent 2009 edition of the *Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick* is available. If you wish to receive a copy, please fill out the following and return to our office by fax or mail.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Language: English _____ French _____

Return to: Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons
 440 King Street, Suite 648, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H8
 Fax: (506) 444-3001 E-mail: pcsdp@gnb.ca

Updates are available upon request throughout the year