

ISSN 0835-6165

COMMUNIQUÉ

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



Summer Edition 2010

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Ce bulletin est disponible en français!

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Chairperson's Message



The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons has been very busy over the course of the last several months working on various issues for persons with disabilities living in New Brunswick.

High on our priority list has been contacting provincial *departments to request the final Status Report updates to the Disability Action Plan Strategy - The Path to Self-Sufficiency and Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick*. Our goal is to produce a Report Card once we have received the updated responses from each department. A 'grade' will be given based on the updates/responses received. The expected public release of this document will be on December 3rd 2010.

Once the Report Card is publicly released, the Council will produce a new updated Disability Action Plan Strategy looking at new and outstanding recommendations to government. We look forward to working with all stakeholders on this initiative.

I would like to thank the Council members and our staff for their hard work. We look forward to our continued involvement with government, community stakeholders, service providers and the public-at-large as we move toward our objective of breaking down barriers for citizens with disabilities.

We remind our readers that more information about our activities is available on our website at www.gnb.ca/council or through our publications, such as the Annual Report.

“Every active force produces more than one change – every cause produces more than one effect.” – *Herbert Spencer*

Executive Director's Message

There are many topics and information that we want to help share with persons with disabilities and the various stakeholders. That is why we have created a section on the Council's website called "Stay Informed!" We encourage you to visit our website to keep up-to-date on the current issues and information as well as to find out different activities that the Council is currently involved with.



Please note that several directories have been updated on the Council website during the summer months and we encourage our readers to visit the Council website at www.gnb.ca/council.

New Brunswick Disability Awareness Week (DAW) 2010 was a big success with the theme of “Yes We Can!”. We thank our sponsors and the many supporters. Also a special thank you to Terry Kelly who facilitated the workshop after the Legislative Breakfast. Walk & Roll events were held in over 100 locations, the annual Legislative Breakfast and workshop was a full house; various contests and special events involved large numbers of participants and the provincial award winners were well received. The 2010 Provincial Awards were presented to Amélie Archer (Acadian Peninsula); William (Bill) Turney (Fredericton); and the Learning Disability Association of New Brunswick. Thank you to all that participated in the DAW events and contests! Further details are on our website at www.gnb.ca/0048/DAW2010/indexdaw2010-e.asp.

We hope you will find this new edition of “Communiqué” to be useful and we welcome your feedback.

Have a wonderful and safe summer!

“What the heart knows today, the head will understand tomorrow.” – *James Stephens*

Staff Members



Christyne Allain
Executive Director



Lui Greco
Assistant Executive Director



Geb Bernard
Information Clerk



Kristin Colwell
Secretary/Bookkeeper

We also have a 5th staff member who plays a very important role here at the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons. Started in early January 2010, he was hired on as support staff. He was born and raised in Long Island New York. From an early age he has shown an interest in helping individuals. In 2007 he completed the program offered by the Guide Dog Foundation. He is highly committed and



dedicated to his work and is there to assist when needed. From time to time he is caught sleeping on the job, though is still a valuable asset to the team!

Elections New Brunswick accessible voting

September 27, 2010 is the date of New Brunswick's next provincial election. Elections New Brunswick in partnership with the Neil Squires Society have developed what promises to be Canada's first fully accessible election. Six new accommodations for voters with disabilities will be implemented this fall. These include:

- Using a scent reduce marker
- Braille controller with audio
- Sip and puff with audio
- Paddles with audio
- Braille instruction sheet
- With a friend



In addition to these new accommodations, Elections New Brunswick continues to offer:

- Special Voting Officers: Special Voting Officers assist electors at the Returning Offices who are unable to vote in person either at the advance polls or at the ordinary polls on Election Day. By issuing ballots and collecting them in a ballot box, home-bound electors are able to vote at their homes, in hospitals, at treatment centres, or other designated locations.
- Extended Voting Period: Special Ballots issued at the Returning Offices provide voters the opportunity to vote from August 26, 2010 continuing until Election Day, September 27, 2010. The Returning Office hours are Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. and Saturday's 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Voters also have 3 designated days to exercise their right to vote:
 - Advance Polls-September 18 and 20, 2010
 - Election Day-September 27, 2010(These polls are open from 10am to 8pm.)
- Pocket Talkers: Pocket Talkers are personal amplifiers that help improve communication in difficult listening situations. They are designed for individuals with hearing difficulties who don't have a hearing aid. These amplifiers are portable and can be used in one-to-one interactions with our election officials. The Pocket talkers are available at all Returning Offices. If you feel that you would benefit from this device, tell our Special Voting Officers and they will be happy to provide one to you.
- Level Access Polling Site: Elections New Brunswick recognizes the importance of finding Returning Offices and Polling Locations that are accessible to all electors. We make every effort to find facilities that are barrier free and where possible close to bus routes.

- **Large Font / High Contrast Ballot:** Elections New Brunswick is proud to announce that our new Ballots are printed using a large white font on a black background. This will make the task of reading the candidates name much easier.
- **Magnifier:** Magnifiers are provided at all Polling Stations. If you have your own prescribed magnifier, you can bring it with you.
- **Visual Language Interpreter:** Visual language (ASL/LSQ) services are also available through:
 South-East Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services – light color
 Saint John Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services – dark color

This service is available by appointment only on the following dates:

- Advance Polling Day - September 18, 2010
- Advance Polling Day - September 20, 2010
- Election Day - September 27, 2010

For questions regarding the September 27 election contact Elections NB at:

General Information:

Telephone: 1-506-453-2218

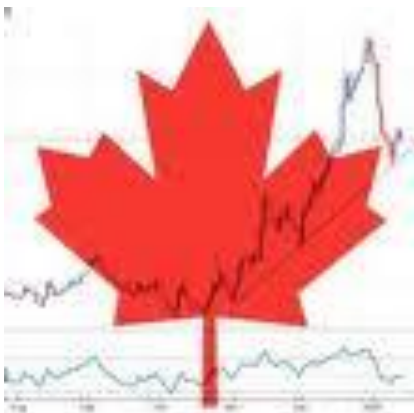
Monday to Friday: 8:15 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Toll free: 1-888-858-VOTE (8683)

 TTY: 1-888-718-0544

Toll free: 1-800-308-2922 (New Brunswick)

Decision to eliminate the mandatory completion of the Long Form Census Questionnaire



As you may know, the federal government recently announced proposed changes to the Canadian census to make the mandatory long-form questionnaire voluntary for the 2011 Census. The Premier’s Council is urging the government to reconsider this decision and have written a letter to the Hon. Tony Clement sharing our disappointment and concerns. Our letter, addressing our concerns about the proposed census changes, is currently available on our website at www.gnb.ca/council. We encourage you to share our letter amongst your colleagues.

Travel information for persons with disabilities



<http://www.accesstotravel.gc.ca>

The Access to Travel (ATT) website, your accessible travel information source, provides information on accessible transportation and travel across Canada with the aim of making accessible travel an easier and more enjoyable experience for Canadians with disabilities and seniors, as well as for their families and caregivers.

Transport Canada (TC) derives its responsibility for accessibility from the National Transportation Policy articulated in the Canada Transportation Act that states "it is declared that a competitive, economic and efficient national transportation system...(is, inter alia) most likely to be achieved when the transportation system is accessible without undue obstacle to the mobility of persons, including persons with disabilities".



This website contains many useful resources for persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers. As many readers of this news letter can attest, despite the best laid plans sometimes things happen. Access to travel is a valuable resource in locating various policies and contact information.

Also take a look at the *Take Charge of Your Travel: A Guide for Persons with Disabilities*. This document can be found at:

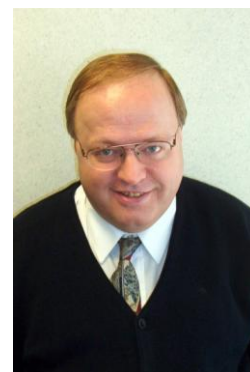
<http://www.otc-cta.gc.ca/doc.php?sid=1021&lang=eng#Iresourc>

New Chairperson for the Human Rights Commission named

Randy Dickinson of Fredericton has been appointed the new chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, effective May 1st.

Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour Minister Donald Arseneault, who is also the minister responsible for the commission, made the announcement.

"I am pleased to announce this appointment," Arseneault said. "Randy Dickinson has had a tremendous career as adviser and as an advocate for persons with disabilities. He has also played a key role as a member of multiple health-care and inclusive-education advisory bodies. His experience and leadership skills will be of great benefit to the human rights commission and the province."



Dickinson spent 24 years as the Executive Director of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons until his retirement in 2009. He was also Executive Director of the Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled; Executive Director of the Canadian Paraplegic

Association of New Brunswick; and Executive Director of the Premier's Council on Health Strategy in the 1990s.

"I am looking forward to supporting the other commission members and the hard-working staff as we move forward in a timely and comprehensive manner to respect the important mandate of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission for the benefit of all the people of the province," Dickinson said.

Dickinson will replace Gordon Porter, who had served as commission chair since 2005.

"I recognize outgoing chair Gordon Porter for his many years of hard work and dedication with the Human Rights Commission," said Arseneault.

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons would like to echo Minister Arseneault's comments. Randy's efforts over the past many years have played an important part in the success of New Brunswick residents with disabilities.

Rollover of RRSP proceeds to an RDSP

Budget 2010 proposes to extend the existing RRSP rollover rules to allow a rollover of a deceased individual's RRSP proceeds to the RDSP of a financially dependent infirm child or grandchild.

An individual who qualifies to be an RDSP beneficiary and who meets the age and residency requirements for RDSP contributions will be eligible to roll over RRSP proceeds received as a result of the death of their parent or grandparent to their RDSP if the requirements under the existing RRSP rollover rules are satisfied (that is, if the RDSP beneficiary was financially dependent on the deceased individual by reason of physical or mental infirmity). An infirm child or grandchild is generally considered to be financially dependent if the child's income for the year preceding the year of death did not exceed a specified threshold (\$17,621 for 2010). An infirm child with income above this amount may also be considered to be financially dependent, but only if the dependency can be demonstrated based on the particular facts.

The amount of RRSP proceeds rolled over into an RDSP will not be permitted to exceed the beneficiary's available RDSP contribution room. The lifetime contribution limit for RDSPs is \$200,000. The rolled-over proceeds will reduce the beneficiary's RDSP contribution room, but will not attract Canada Disability Savings Grants. These proceeds will be considered private contributions for the purpose of determining whether an RDSP is a primarily government-assisted plan (a plan where Canada Disability Savings Grants and Canada Disability Savings Bonds paid to the plan exceed private contributions made to the plan, and which is consequentially subject to a number of additional requirements). Since the amount of RRSP proceeds rolled over to an RDSP will not have been subject to income tax, the amount will form

part of the portion of a disability assistance payment that is included in the beneficiary's income when withdrawn from the RDSP.

Also of interest is the information being proposed in this year's budget dealing with carry forward provisions:

In recognition of the fact that families of children with disabilities may not be able to contribute regularly to their plans, Budget 2010 proposes to amend the Canada Disability Savings Act to allow a 10-year carry forward of CDSG and CDSB entitlements.

Upon opening an RDSP, CDSB entitlements will be determined and paid into the plan for the preceding 10 years (not before 2008, the year RDSPs became available), based on the beneficiary's family income in those years. Balances of unused CDSG entitlements will also be determined and maintained for the same period. CDSGs will be paid on unused entitlements, up to an annual maximum of \$10,500.

For more details visit: <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2010/plan/anx5-eng.html#a10>

“Little and often makes a lot in time” –
German Proverb

Disability Supports Program goes province wide

On July 1, 2010, the Government of New Brunswick implemented the Disability Supports Program, (DSP) in all regions of the province. Since its inception, the program has been piloted in Fredericton, Woodstock, Perth Andover, Edmundston and Grand Falls; regions 2 and 3. As of July 1, 2010 this program is now available throughout the entire province.

Who is eligible? Any resident of New Brunswick between 19 and 65 years of age with a long term disability.

Supports under the DSP include:

Personal Support	Used within and outside the home.
Community Support	Designed for participation and for development of personal competence in accessing services and supports, including, volunteer activities, and social/cultural/recreational events.
Home Worker Support	

Respite Support	
Personal Living Skills Training	
Transportation	Disability specific
Technical Aids and Devices	<p>Are disability specific and provided when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ recommended by a health care practitioner ▪ not covered under other programs ▪ not covered or partially covered by private insurance <p>May be provided to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ assist in care giving ▪ reduce paid support services ▪ be cost shared with individuals/families for unmet needs
Residential Services	

7 tips on how to deal with vision loss

Dealing with vision loss is challenging. For people with glaucoma, macular degeneration, or another vision problem, low-vision aids can help optimize remaining vision and improve the ability to perform daily activities.

Some example of low-vision aids are telescopes, closed-circuit televisions (a small television camera is mounted on a movable tray; documents or other objects are moved under the camera and viewed on a small monitor), magnifying glasses, clocks and phones with large numbers, and large-print reading materials. Telescopes and closed-circuit televisions require an evaluation and prescription from an eye care professional as well as training in how to use them.

Many low-vision aids are available through low-vision clinics and low-vision rehabilitation services. Researchers are also testing implantation of a miniature telescope into damaged eyes.



Mild vision impairment has little effect on day-to-day activities, but moderate to severe vision impairment can make it difficult for people to perform common household tasks. Ophthalmologists and low-vision counselors recommend these simple, practical strategies to help patients with low vision maintain their independence.

1. Always leave doors completely open or completely closed. This reduces the risk of accidentally walking into the door edge if you have low vision.
2. Tack down loose rugs and use non-slip mats beneath them. Or you can hold down rugs with furniture to prevent slipping and tripping.
3. Tape a colourful piece of paper to all clear glass doors. If you have low vision, this will help you determine whether the door is open or closed and prevent collisions.
4. Avoid using glass-topped coffee or end tables. The edges are extremely difficult to see, making bumping injuries more likely if you have low vision.
5. Mark the important settings on the dials of the stove, washer, dryer, and other appliances using brightly coloured tape.
6. Mark the outer edge of all indoor and outdoor stairs. Use a strip of paint or non-skid material in a color that contrasts with the rest of the step. The strip should extend about two inches from the edge, both horizontally and vertically and should go across the full width of the step. This reduces the chances of tripping or falling on the stairs if you have low vision.
7. Separate clothes according to color and then use labelled dividers to identify them.

“The things you control, you take care of. The things you don’t control, you let take their own course.” – *Dom Capers*

There's no longer any reason why websites shouldn't or can't be made accessible



Your feedback to an organization can help improve the accessibility of websites for you and many other people who use the websites. Website owners have many priorities for changes and improvements, and the more an organization hears about accessibility from people who use their website, the more likely it is that accessibility will become a higher priority. Positive feedback is useful, as well as critical feedback.

Some website owners are not even aware of the importance of making their website accessible. Websites are required to be accessible in many countries by national policies. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that people with disabilities have a right to access information and services via the Internet. Also, accessible websites provide business benefits for website owners and benefits for people without disabilities.

This document provides guidance on encouraging organizations to make their websites accessible, particularly when you find accessibility barriers on a website. While most accessibility barriers are caused by poor website design, some accessibility problems might be

related to settings in your web browser or assistive technology. (WAI plans to publish guidance on how to customize your settings so it's easier to use websites in early 2010.)

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/users/inaccessible>

“The question for each man is not what he would do if he had the means, time, influence and educational advantages, but what he will do with the things he has.”
– *Frank Hamilton*

New Brunswick Energy and Utilities Board grants Acadian Bus permission to change scheduling

In November 2009, Acadian Bus made application to the New Brunswick Energy and Utilities Board (NBEUB) to eliminate service between Fredericton and Miramichi and between Saint John and Bangor. As well, the application proposed changes to service from Fredericton to Rivière-du-Loup as well as a reduction in service to PEI. Acadian claimed that they have been losing money on these routes for years and could no longer do so. Their application proposed improving service between New Brunswick major cities and Halifax. This increase would see up to 4 trips daily between Saint John, Moncton and Fredericton and 5 daily trips from Halifax to Moncton.

On July 16, the NBEUB handed down their decision. The decision was to reduce service to 3 days/week on the Fredericton/Miramichi and Saint John/St. Stephen routes. Also, service between Fredericton and Rivière-du-Loup will be reduced and there will no longer be any bus service to Bangor, Maine (USA). This new schedule will come into effect sometime after October 1st.

The decision should be posted shortly to the NBEUB website located at <http://www.nbeub.ca/index.php/en/board-decisions/motor-carrier-board-decisions>

New study suggests co-workers may have some important insights about how best to help injured workers get back to, and stay on, the job



If you're trying to bring an injured worker back to work, you may want to talk to his or her co-workers. A new study suggests they may have some important insights about how best to help the injured worker get back to, and stay on, the job.

“Co-workers can play a positive role in the return-to-work (RTW) process, yet their efforts are sometimes ‘invisible’ to supervisors,” notes doctoral candidate Åsa Tjulin. She spent time in 2009 at the Institute for Work & Health (IWH) as a student in the Work Disability Prevention CIHR Strategic Training Program (see below).

The role of co-workers becomes especially prominent, Tjulin says, once an injured worker comes back to work. That’s the point at which the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that the worker’s return goes smoothly may shift from the supervisor to co-workers. “A lot of effort is made by co-workers behind the scenes, and their efforts are not always noted by supervisors.”

Tjulin designed and carried out a qualitative study involving three public-sector workplaces in Sweden. She analyzed the data with IWH Scientist Dr. Ellen MacEachen (her mentor in the training program). Open-ended interviews were conducted with seven returning workers, two or three of their co-workers, and the supervisor and/or human resources manager responsible for the return. The workers had been off work due to such conditions as musculoskeletal injuries, mental health disorders and cancer.

Although the study took place in Sweden, MacEachen says the findings may be applied elsewhere. “Return to work tends to focus on relations between the worker and the supervisor or employer,” she says. “We suggest that the broader social environment – including co-worker relations – plays a critical role in return to work, regardless of jurisdiction or organizational differences.”

<http://www.iwh.on.ca/at-work/60/co-workers-play-an-important-but-sometimes-invisible-role-in-rtw>

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Your Recovery Journey

Your Recovery Journey is based on the experiences of people who have a mental illness and who know there is hope, who are well and doing the things they want with their lives. The program offers five free interactive weekly sessions facilitated by people in recovery who can give you valuable information that will help you on your recovery journey. You’ll also learn how to find peer support and build new life skills. The program is designed for any person with mental illness who would like to find support and explore the different aspects of recovery. Using a variety of formats, including presentations, interactive exercises, and structure activities, the program guides participants towards their goals of establishing and maintaining wellness.

For more information please contact The Schizophrenia Society of Canada at info@schizophrenia.ca or visit their website at www.schizophrenia.ca.

***Out Loud* publication**

Out Loud is a collection of more than 50 essays by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians from all walks of life who have been affected by mental illness. The book was published in partnership between Canadian Mental Health Association, NL Division (CMHA-NL), and Breakwater Books, Ltd., The book features essays by those who have experienced mental illness themselves, their family and friends, community members and professionals who deal with mental illness. The voices are ones of hope, pain and honesty. The true meaning in this compelling collection is found in the willingness of the essayists to step forward and share their experiences in hopes of lessening stigma and broadening the conversation about mental illness. You can purchase *Out Loud* online from www.breakwaterbooks.com/ or from www.chapters.indigo.ca. Royalties from the sale of the book will benefit CMHA-NL, the Pottle Centre, the Schizophrenia Society of NL and CHANNAL (Consumers' Health Awareness Network Newfoundland and Labrador). For more information about Out Loud, contact CMHA-NL. Website: www.cmhanl.ca/

DAW 2010 another success!



Disability Awareness Week (DAW) was celebrated by the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons from May 30 to June 5, 2010. 133 events were organized in every corner of New Brunswick and by people of all ages.

The legislative breakfast took place on June 1st at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Fredericton. Stakeholders, service providers, MLAs, the Premier and several senior cabinet ministers as well as members of the official opposition and other parties were in attendance.

The guest speaker for the workshop following the breakfast was Terry Kelly. Mr. Kelly, blind from birth, help solidify the theme for DAW 2010 "YES WE CAN!"

Plans are now under way for DAW 2011 and suggestions would be gladly received. Contact the Council to share your ideas or to find out how your organization can participate. As always, the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons website will contain any updates. Visit www.gnb.ca/council to keep up-to-date on what's happening within the disability community throughout New Brunswick.

PCSDP Information Directories



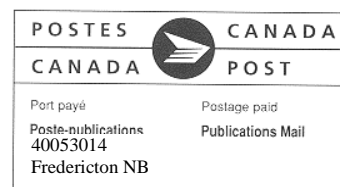
Throughout the year, the Council maintains several directories of services available to persons with disabilities living in New Brunswick. These directories are available at www.gnb.ca/council, by contacting the office at 1 (800) 442-4412 or by e-mail at pcsdp@gnb.ca. Upon request, these directories can be made available in alternate formats.

- *Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick* – Provides listings of a wide variety of government and not-for-profit organizations offering any disability related services or support to persons with disabilities.
- *Directory of Financial Aid for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick* – Includes programs and services providing financial aid, offered by both federal or provincial agencies.
- *Transportation Directory for Persons with Disabilities and Seniors* – Lists transportation services available to seniors as well as persons with disabilities.
- *Directory of Career Counselling and Job Placement Services* – Lists organizations providing support to persons with disabilities with any aspect of finding employment.
- *Directory of Financial Assistance for Students with Disabilities* – Lists scholarships, bursaries and grants offered specifically to students with disabilities. This directory focuses on programs available to persons living in New Brunswick or the Maritime provinces.
- *Sources of Funding Assistance and/or Rehabilitation Equipment Loan Programs* – Lists sources of funding through the provincial government and other agencies for adaptive equipment.
- *Funding Sources for Barrier-Free Access* – Lists various sources available through governments and other agencies to help make homes, public buildings or businesses more accessible by persons with disabilities.
- *The Vehicle Retrofit Programs and Mobility Access Programs* – Lists sources of funding available to assist with the costs of modifying vehicles for transporting persons with disabilities. This directory also includes vendors of various equipment and services. Please note, the Council provides this directory for informational purposes only, NO endorsement of any kind should be inferred for organizations included or excluded from this directory.

Although every effort is made to ensure that the contents of these directories are correct, we would appreciate input if errors or omissions are detected.



Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons
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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 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