

STATUS REPORT #1

***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***

**Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons
440 King Street, Suite 648
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H8
Telephone: (506) 444-3000
Fax: (506) 444-3001
E-mail: pcsdp@gnb.ca
Website: www.gnb.ca/0048**

December 2008

"The system must have the capacity to be flexible enough to deal with people as individuals while still striving for equity in outcomes."

"This report is based on five principles that we are committed to as a government:

- Equality and Full Citizenship*
- Inclusion – Equity of Opportunity*
- Empowerment and Self-Determination*
- Rights and Responsibilities*
- Assured Support for Basic Needs"*

(Taken from remarks made by Premier Shawn Graham at the press conference to release the *Disability Action Plan Strategy – The Path to Self-Sufficiency and Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick*. December 3, 2007)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	VALUES AND PRINCIPLES	2
	Description of Values and Principles	2
III	GENERAL OBJECTIVES	4
	a) Full Citizenship.....	4
	b) Disability Supports.....	4
	c) Poverty	5
	d) Education.....	6
	e) Employment.....	6
	f) Housing	7
	g) Universal Design/Barrier Free Access	8
	h) Transportation	9
	i) Recreation/Wellness	10
	j) Other Topics.....	10
IV	RECOMMENDATIONS & RESPONSES TO DATE	12
	APPENDICES	66
	APPENDIX A - Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons	66
	APPENDIX B - Definitions of Terminology	67
	APPENDIX C - Statistics on Persons with Disabilities.....	69
	APPENDIX D - Index of Recommendations by Government Departments Responsible	71

I INTRODUCTION

The *Disability Action Plan Strategy – The Path to Self-Sufficiency and Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick* was released publicly by the Premier on December 3, 2007. That date marked the annual United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons.

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons agreed to take the responsibility for collecting information updates from the departments involved to monitor actions being taken towards the implementation of the recommendations contained in the document.

It was the intention to have the first status report ready for public release on the anniversary date of December 3rd.

We have noted that there were some adjustments made in departmental roles and that the name of the Department of Family & Community Services was subsequently changed to the Department of Social Development.

New disability statistics from the 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey have been compiled and released by Statistics Canada. Among other observations, we know that the rate of disability in New Brunswick has increased since the survey conducted in 2001.

We would like to thank the various officials from the different departments who have assisted us in gathering this first summary of actions taken to date to respond to the 100 recommendations of the *Disability Action Plan Strategy*.

The Premier and his government have been supportive of the values and principles and the general objectives presented in the report.

We recognize that a significant amount of progress has been made on a number of the recommendations. Others will require more time, further consultation and additional resources in order to be achieved.

It is our intention to continue to monitor the actions being taken on all of the recommendations and to prepare another status report in the coming year to hold the implementation process publicly accountable.

II VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

DESCRIPTION OF VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The following values and principles will guide all aspects of the development, implementation and evaluation of the Strategy for Persons Living with Disabilities in New Brunswick. They are consistent with the content of the *In Unison* report, the guiding principles of the *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons* and the values and principles offered by the disability community in New Brunswick.

Equality and Full Citizenship

Equality is a right guaranteed to all Canadian citizens. Citizenship refers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society. Citizenship implies participation in and contribution to the systems and the "core" services in which all Canadians can participate and to which most Canadians have access. Persons with disabilities must be recognized for their abilities, their personal contribution and their inherent worth.

Inclusion - Equity of Opportunity

New Brunswickers with disabilities need support to reach a level playing field where they can demonstrate their full potential as contributing citizens. Physical and attitudinal barriers must also be reduced. Support is simply a means to enhance abilities and potentials. *In Unison* commits our senior governments to collaborative action to ensure that supports are available, portable and affordable; personal supports, education and employment supports, and income supports.

Empowerment and Self-determination

Persons with disabilities require the means to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being. Individuals must have control over their lives; support mechanisms must recognize and encourage each individual's freedom of choice. Support systems must allow each individual to select from among a range of options for living and working in the community. Self-reliance and independent living are implied goals.

Individuals and their families must be full partners in developing the policies that affect them. Consultation with consumers must occur as a matter of course. **"Nothing about us without us!"**

***Rights and
Responsibilities***

Persons with disabilities have the same rights and the same responsibilities as other Canadians. This freedom also includes the implications and consequences of risk-taking; a disability does not relieve someone of responsibility for their life and their actions.

***Assured Support
for Basic Needs***

It is easy to forget that persons with disabilities often face greater challenges and have more difficulty addressing basic survival needs. Special support may be necessary to meet essential safety and security needs. Income support may be required to ensure a life of well-being, comfort and dignity.

III GENERAL OBJECTIVES

A) FULL CITIZENSHIP

Persons with disabilities are supposed to enjoy the same rights and the same opportunities as all other citizens in our communities, in our province and in this great country of Canada.

Government at all levels must demonstrate leadership and set an example so that persons with disabilities will be able to lead fulfilling lives with dignity and as much self-sufficiency as possible.

Legal citizenship rights enshrined in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, in the federal *Human Rights Act* or in the *N.B. Human Rights Act* are not meaningful if barriers to full social and economic participation remain for many persons with disabilities in many regular aspects of their daily lives.

We have raised the bar considerably in the last few decades but we still have a long way to go to break down the remaining practical and attitudinal barriers to become an inclusive and diverse society.

Objectives:

- **To make all communities in New Brunswick inclusive places for persons with disabilities.**
- **To educate the public at large about the vision and principles of full citizenship for all persons and to understand the positive potential and abilities of citizens with disabilities.**
- **To involve consumers in all aspects of the planning and delivery of public services and facilities.**

B) DISABILITY SUPPORTS

Disability supports address service needs for personal assistance in daily living so as to enable individuals with disabilities to facilitate their personal development and their participation and inclusion in their communities. Disability supports need to be flexible and based on the needs of the individual in order to be effective in achieving desirable outcomes. The persons with disabilities affected and/or their caregivers need to be actively engaged in the development, negotiation, and direction of their own personalized and flexible disability supports.

Not all persons with different disabilities will require the same type or level of disability supports. Some families will have the necessary financial means to cover the costs of their own disability supports or will have access to insurance to help offset these costs. However, for many persons with disabilities, assistance will be required from public and community resources in order to provide them with the tools they need to function independently and with dignity if they are going to be able to participate fully in their community. It will be very important to carefully assess the needs of each individual using their input and personal objectives in order to design a package of supports to achieve those goals in a manner that is sustainable and fair to all concerned.

Objectives:

- **To improve access to disability supports.**
- **To ensure that consumers are actively involved in the development and delivery of disability support programs.**
- **To ensure that the type of disability involved, the age of the person, personal or household income, or where they happen to live will not be barriers to obtaining necessary disability supports.**

C) POVERTY

The reality for many persons with disabilities and their families living in New Brunswick is that they must deal with their disability as well as frequently existing on low levels of income. Persons with disabilities have the same living expenses as other citizens for things like housing, food, transportation, clothing, recreation, etc. Most persons with disabilities can also have other expenses directly related to their disability for prescription medications, mobility equipment, technical aids, home renovations, accessible transportation, testing supplies, home care supports, etc.

Persons with disabilities may also have extra expenses to hire people to perform work for them like shovelling the driveway, housecleaning, lawn care, etc. that they are unable to do for themselves due to their disability limitations. Persons with disabilities on low and fixed incomes are limited to their ability to participate fully in the activities of their community because they do not even have enough income to pay for the necessities of life. If you cannot pay your rent or utility bills or buy decent food you certainly cannot afford recreation and transportation.

Many persons with disabilities who are employed may be working in entry-level positions with low wages and lack of benefits or perhaps are only working part-time due to the difficulty in accommodating their disability.

Objectives:

- **To reduce the overall level of poverty among persons/families with disability.**
- **To separate eligibility for disability supports from income assistance eligibility.**
- **To ensure that persons with disabilities have enough income to meet their basic needs and reasonable standards of living in the community.**

D) EDUCATION

Our society continues to move forward with tremendous improvements in communication technology and other developments that had a profound impact on our communities in general and the workplace in particular. In order to be successful today every citizen needs to have strong literacy and numeracy skills with an appropriate education to help prepare them to interact successfully with their social peers and to attain their goals of self-sufficiency.

For persons with different disabilities it is especially critical that they have full and complete access to all levels of educational opportunities in order to offset any barriers that may be created by their disabilities. We are looking for ideas to ensure that all students with disabilities are properly supported in the public school system as well as having complete access to all forms of post-secondary education that are available in the province and elsewhere. We need to ensure that teachers and other support staff are properly trained and prepared to respond to the support requirements necessary to ensure a good education for all students with disabilities. We also want to see that facilities and programs are designed and constructed to be barrier free for students and staff and visitors with different disabilities.

Objectives:

- **To ensure that the inclusive public school system continues to evolve so that all students with any disability are supported to reach their full potential.**
- **To increase the number of students with disabilities who go on to successfully complete post-secondary education options.**
- **To ensure that teachers and other staff in the education system are properly trained and supported to enable all students to enjoy an inclusive education.**

E) EMPLOYMENT

Our society has an expectation for most adults that they will be employed and self-sufficient economically to the greatest extent possible. Having a job provides not only a sense of purpose, but also creates an income to finance both the necessities of life and other activities that add to the quality of life such as access to recreation and other pursuits. Unfortunately it is clear that many people with disabilities will likely

face barriers in obtaining the necessary education and training and then finding meaningful long-term employment.

We are hoping that the changes in the population demographics of our province will create many more opportunities for persons with disabilities to be accepted into the work force and to find the jobs they are looking for. Employers should see persons with disabilities as an under-utilized resource. We need to break down the myths and stereotypes that may have prevented applicants with disabilities from being hired in the past. We are also encouraged by many employers who have now recognized it makes good business sense to accommodate their existing workers who may develop a disability due to an injury or illness and to look to other persons with disabilities for potential new hires. Insurance companies also understand that it is a good investment to assist workers with disabilities to stay on the job through retraining and job accommodations rather than paying out long-term disability pensions for the worker to stay at home.

Objectives:

- **To increase the number of persons with disabilities who successfully find and maintain long term meaningful paid employment to a level comparable to the general population.**
- **To increase the awareness of employers about the positive potential of persons with disabilities to be good employees.**
- **To facilitate smooth transitions to work from different types of education, training or income support programs whether it is for full or part-time employment or for self employment opportunities.**

F) HOUSING

Having a safe, decent, and affordable place to live is one of the things that most citizens would take for granted as a basic necessity for life. However for persons with certain disabilities, the issue of barrier free access is also a significant factor in determining where they can live. They will often have to limit their possible choices based on both affordability and accessibility. Newer buildings designed to include more barrier free options are often priced out of reach for the majority of consumers with disabilities living with fixed incomes. The current amount of available non-profit public housing choices is woefully inadequate to meet the huge pent-up demand from low income consumers and families across the province.

Affordable and accessible housing needs to be located in areas close to schools, shopping, medical services, banking, recreational opportunities and other community related programs so that lack of affordable and accessible transportation will not become a barrier to participation in the community. Some persons with disabilities will also need access to support services such as homemakers and attendant care in order to be able to live independently in their housing choice in the community.

Objectives:

- **To increase the number of accessible and affordable housing units in the province.**
- **To promote the concept of universal barrier free design concepts in all new housing projects including renovations of existing housing stocks where feasible.**
- **To create different housing options with disability supports required for certain youth and adults as an alternative to premature placements in nursing homes.**

G) UNIVERSAL DESIGN-BARRIER FREE ACCESS

Many public facilities and programs in New Brunswick have not been adequately designed to be able to easily accommodate the particular needs of persons with different types of disabilities. When we talk about concepts of universal or barrier free design we are not limiting our conversation to wheelchair ramps and wide doors or designated parking spaces. We need to remember that many citizens of all ages can face barriers to their participation if we have not thought about how do we include persons who may have difficulty seeing or hearing or reading as well as the obvious limitations caused by various types of mobility problems.

Barrier free access is not only related to the physical design and construction of public facilities and housing options but also in how we deliver programs and train our staff and employees to create an environment that is both accommodating and welcoming for persons with disabilities. Planners and builders need to think about the needs of persons with disabilities from the place where they will arrive to enter the building and what they will be able to do and where they will be able to safely and easily go once inside the structure. Properly implemented universal design or barrier free access will open the facility to all potential users.

Objectives:

- **To enhance the mandatory provisions under the legislation and regulations of the provincial building code to require consistent minimum universal design-barrier free access standards in all public facilities and buildings open to the**

public.

- **To promote awareness of the population demographics to create more support for the business case that justifies expenses related to renovations or new construction to address barrier free access concerns.**
- **To enhance funding programs, tax measures and other incentives to enable more building owners and landlords to improve barrier free access to their premises.**

H) TRANSPORTATION

New Brunswick is a largely rural province, which makes the issue of transportation services extremely problematic for persons with disabilities who may require certain accessibility features to be able to use transportation. A lot of consumers with disabilities will not be able to afford to own and operate their own vehicles due to their low income. Many of our rehabilitation and specialized services and programs for persons with disabilities will tend to be located in the larger urban communities of the province. Getting from where you are to where you want to be becomes very difficult for many citizens with disabilities.

Access to education, access to rehabilitation, access to employment, taking care of personal banking and shopping, and being able to enjoy various recreational opportunities means that most people will require transportation. Very few communities in New Brunswick currently operate public transit services and some communities do not even have private taxis available to the general public. They certainly do not have accessible transportation services for persons with disabilities.

We do have some examples of good transportation services operated by various municipalities and by certain non-profit organizations. We can look at Ability Transit in Moncton, The Dial-A-Bus service in Fredericton, Charlotte County Dial A Ride, the Vehicle Retrofit Program of the Department of Transportation, etc. However, we must develop a system that provides more consistent and more affordable and more accessible transportation options for more persons with disabilities in New Brunswick.

Objectives:

- **To increase the number of carriers who offer affordable and accessible transportation services for travelling in our communities and across New Brunswick.**
- **To develop programs of financial incentives to enable non-profit community organizations and private taxi companies to acquire and operate accessible vehicles for public transportation for seniors and/or persons with disabilities.**

- **To conduct public awareness campaigns and possibly offer incentives to encourage private citizens to offer rides to people who do not have access to transportation of their own.**

I) RECREATION/WELLNESS

People with disabilities need to have regular access to recreational and active living opportunities in order to maintain their physical and mental well-being for the same reasons that all citizens benefit from such activities. Some persons with disabilities may require adaptive programming and perhaps special equipment in order to participate due to the nature and level of their disability. However, most persons with disabilities can certainly participate in the same regular programs and recreational opportunities that most other citizens choose to enjoy. Unfortunately we still have many recreational facilities that were built without adequate consideration for the needs of participants and spectators with different disabilities. The other reality for many persons with disabilities is that they have limited income and are unable to afford transportation, participation and admission fees, required equipment, etc. in order to participate in many typical recreational and active living experiences.

We would like to compliment those facilities and programs across the province who have made serious efforts to increase the number of people with disabilities who are able to participate in their services and programs by making them more barrier free and offering support if needed for any participants with disabilities.

Objectives:

- **To increase the number of persons with disabilities of all types and of all ages to regularly participate in healthy recreation and wellness activities.**
- **To ensure that all public recreational programs and facilities are doing what is necessary to enable the inclusive participation of persons with disabilities.**
- **To develop initiatives to assist persons with the required costs of transportation, admission fees, equipment, etc... if such costs are a barrier to their participation in recreational programs.**

J) OTHER TOPICS

During the Disability Stakeholders' Summit we have talked about a number of the issues that affect opportunities for inclusion of citizens with disabilities in the economic and social life of the province of New Brunswick. Of course there are many complications when we try to address the concerns of all types and for all ages of persons with disabilities. In addition to the plenary sessions we offered eight

different topics in the workshop groups looking at such matters as education, poverty, transportation, recreation, employment, housing, disability supports, and barrier free access.

As you know, it is the intention of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons to take all of the information gathered from their various consultations, the recent provincial wide questionnaires, and the input from the Disability Stakeholders' Summit to help us prepare this new Action Plan Strategy on Disability Issues for consideration by the government of New Brunswick.

Objectives:

- **To encourage data collection and research that will help support more evidence based decision making on disability related matters.**
- **To promote wellness and prevention of unnecessary levels of chronic health problems and disabilities.**
- **To encourage documentation and promotion of examples of best practices in inclusive programs.**
- **To allow funding and disability supports to follow the individual rather than the providers.**
- **To ensure that persons with different types of disabilities will have equitable access to needed services.**
- **To promote the awareness and enforcement of basic human rights for persons with disabilities in a timely and cost effective manner.**
- **To ensure that service providers are held accountable for the quality assurance and fair delivery of all programs and services to be available to persons with disabilities.**

IV RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES TO DATE

RECOMMENDATIONS

Please note that the following recommendations are not necessarily listed in order of priority. They are also not necessarily a final list of all options for actions under provincial government jurisdiction.

Unless specified otherwise, each recommendation is intended to apply to all types and levels of disabilities. While lead departments are identified, one should assume that other departments, government agencies and community agencies involved in disability services and issues will be involved in achieving effective solutions to these matters.

<u>FULL CITIZENSHIP</u>

1. **The government of New Brunswick should accept in principle the Values and Principles; General Objectives; Accountability/Outcome Measures; and the Recommendations contained in this new *Disability Action Plan Strategy - The Path to Self-Sufficiency and Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick*.**
 - *Office of the Premier*
 - *Executive Council Office*
 - *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

Premier Shawn Graham participated in a press conference on December 3, 2007 to publicly release the Disability Action Plan Strategy. His government has accepted the Values and Principles and General Objectives outlined in the report and instructed the different government departments to work towards implementation of the recommendations contained in the report. He also agreed that while some recommendations may take longer than others due to the budget implications, he planned to move forward in a timely and comprehensive fashion. The Premier also agreed to have the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons to prepare an annual public report to reveal what progress is being made to address the various recommendations.

2. **The government of New Brunswick shall create an Interdepartmental Committee on the Disability Action Plan Strategy, which will meet at least once a year to allow Deputy Ministers or other designates to report on any departmental services or activities on any departmental services or activities related to responding to the recommendations contained in this report or other new activities related to addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in New Brunswick. This information shall be summarized in a public annual report to be compiled by the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons.**

- *Office of the Premier*
- *Executive Council Office*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

Deputy Ministers have named a specific official in their Department who is responsible to compile information for submission to the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons to outline their actions to address any recommendations that they have been identified with having the lead responsibility.

The Premier's Council will compile this material as part of an annual public status report on the *Disability Action Plan Strategy*.

3. **The Premier of the province shall issue a directive to all departments, government agencies, crown corporations, school districts, community colleges, and regional health authorities calling on them to achieve higher levels of communication, cooperation and operational priorities to address barriers and service needs of citizens with disabilities. All of the components of government must work together to help us achieve greater self-sufficiency and inclusion for persons with disabilities.**

- *Office of the Premier*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

The Premier has indicated his government's interest and support for all stakeholders to work in partnership with government to address disability. The responses to the other recommendations in this report will help illustrate some of the progress made to date.

4. **All government departments, agencies, crown corporations, school districts, community colleges, and regional health authorities should be directed to collect data and program information to keep track of the numbers of persons with disabilities who are being served in their programs.**

- *Office of the Premier*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

Data collection is improving but issues around different definitions and different eligibility criteria used in various government services make it difficult to always identify which clients have a disability. Issues around rules for protecting privacy and personal information also make it very challenging to ensure the ability to cross reference data and ensure accurate information.

It was noted that since the *Disability Action Plan Strategy* report was released in December of 2007 that newer statistics data indicated that the per capita rate of disability has now risen to 17.2% of the general population. This places New Brunswick as having the second highest rate of persons with disabilities in Canada.

5. **The province of New Brunswick needs to work closely with Statistics Canada to obtain as much current statistical data possible on the numbers and levels of different disabilities in the province and generate analysis of the potential impact on services to address the needs of persons with disabilities.**

- *Department of Finance*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

As indicated in the response to recommendation number 4, new statistics have been provided from Statistics Canada since the *Disability Action Plan Strategy* was first published.

Further information on disability statistics can be found on the website of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons at www.gnb.ca/0048.

6. **Government must ensure that consumers, family members, care-givers, service providers, and others directly involved with disability issues have opportunities to participate in the ongoing planning, delivery, and evaluation of programs that affect persons with disabilities.**

- *Office of the Premier*
- *Executive Council Office*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

The government is committed to regular ongoing consultations with the public on matters of interest to them.

A number of government departments have ongoing advisory committees to address such disability issues as inclusive education, disability supports, mental health services, employment, health, and other topics.

Of course persons with disabilities and the groups involved with them are also invited to participate in various public forums, online consultations and submissions made to government on a wide range of issues that affect all citizens including those with disabilities.

The government continues to fund and interact actively with a number of disability groups including the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons who provide regular input to government from the perspective of persons with disabilities.

7. **The provincial government and other stakeholders must continue to support an annual public New Brunswick Disability Awareness Week and also celebrate the annual United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons as a way to draw public attention to issues of interest to persons with disabilities and to recognize positive outcomes.**

- *Office of the Premier*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

New Brunswick will once again support an annual New Brunswick Disability Awareness Week campaign leading up to the celebration of May 31 – June 6, 2009.

More information on the awareness campaign for 2009 can be found by going to the website of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons at www.gnb.ca/0048 and clicking on the link to the Disability Awareness Week website.

It is anticipated that there will be a public event and media release to recognize the United Nations' International Day of Disabled Persons on December 3, 2008.

DISABILITY SUPPORTS

8. **The Department of Social Development should consult with disability stakeholders to modify the current definition of “basic needs” to allow consideration of additional personal rehabilitation equipment and assistive devices required due to a disability. A proposal has already been submitted by the N.B. Disability Executives’ Network to improve the definition to include other items to address ventilation (breathing), communication needs, and items necessary to participate in one’s community.**

- *Department of Social Development*
- *Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

Consultations have been held with disability stakeholders on the Health Services Program coverage, as well as, discussions on the “basic need” definition. The Department has received a submission from NBDEN and will take the recommendations under advisement.

A joint committee co-chaired by Health and Social Development was established to look at the issue of supports for persons who are ventilation dependent and will make recommendations by December 2008. Several external community representatives were named to the Committee along with officials from the two departments.

9. **In cooperation with community stakeholders, the government must ensure that persons with disabilities have timely and affordable access to prescribed technology and/or assistive devices and/or prescribed medication or other disability support services required due to their disability.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

Individuals who are eligible to receive disability supports under the Disability Support Program (DSP) may access specialized technical aids and assistive devices not covered under other programs. (This would not include medical services and prescription drugs.) There was strong support for this ability

voiced during the consultation sessions. This program will now be rolled out across all the regions over the next three years.

Consultations have been undertaken with respect to the issues outlined in the above noted recommendation. The Department is working towards a response to the proposal that was brought forward by community stakeholders to consider how to improve access to required rehabilitation equipment.

- 10. In consultation with community disability groups, the Department of Social Development should move forward with a phased provincial implementation of the new Disability Support Program for Adults with Disabilities using the model and information developed through the two regional pilot projects undertaken in the Fredericton and Edmundston regions.**

- *Department of Social Development*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

In April 2005, the Government of New Brunswick implemented the Disability Support Program Pilot Project in two regions of the Province (Region 3 – Fredericton/Woodstock and Region 4 – Edmundston/Grand Falls). The pilot projects have ended and Regions 3 & 4 will now be considered permanent sites for the Disability Support Program. Provincial roll-out of the program will occur in stages between now and 2010 in order to allow Social Development the time needed to make changes to the program as recommended in the independent evaluation report and consultation sessions with stakeholders and to provide adequate training to staff in the new regions to ensure consistency in the implementation of the program.

- 11. The Department of Social Development must regularly review the departmental policies related to financial assistance, program eligibility and process requirements for persons with disabilities. This review should involve at least one annual provincial meeting involving stakeholder groups actively engaged in dealing with clients with various types of disabilities.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

The Department of Social Development strives to continuously review and improve policies and programs related to all client groups. Recently, the Long Term Care Program has undergone an in-depth review in consultation with stakeholder groups and the community at large. This has resulted in the development of a new Long Term Care Strategy.

- 12. The Department of Health and the Department of Social Development must host a meeting of interested stakeholders to develop a provincial strategy to better respond to the needs of survivors of serious traumatic brain injuries.**

- *Department of Health*
- *Department of Social Development*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

This important issue is not part of the Department of Health's current health plan.

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons is raising this subject as part of their submissions to the provincial review of mental health services being led by Judge Michael McKee on behalf of the Government of New Brunswick. Their response is expected to be completed in early 2009.

- 13. The Department of Social Development and the Department of Health must host a meeting of interested stakeholders to develop a provincial strategy to better respond to the needs of persons who require ventilators and/or other assisted breathing supports and who do not want to remain housed in hospitals.**

- *Department of Social Development*
- *Department of Health*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

The Department of Social Development welcomes input from stakeholders on how to better serve its clients. The Department of Social Development and the Department of Health have recently jointly announced initiatives designed to help provincial residents gain access to quality care and prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and stays. Additionally, a joint committee

co-chaired by Health and Social Development will look at issues around supports for ventilation dependent clients.

14. **The current Home Care Support Programs need to be reviewed in consultation with community stakeholders to address policies, budgets, training, and working conditions for home care support workers in New Brunswick. Nova Scotia could serve as a model using their Continuing Care Program.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

Officials from Social Development meet regularly with the New Brunswick Home Support Association to address common issues and concerns around the home support programs. The Government of New Brunswick is committed to improving the wages and benefits for home support workers. In consultation with the New Brunswick Home Support Association, Social Development has developed minimum benchmarks for home support agencies to ensure that the majority of any increases in the hourly rates and transportation rates are to be passed to the home support workers. Under the Wage Gap Initiative, employees of Social Development are working in collaboration with the Executive Council Office to provide recommendations to government regarding pay equity for home support workers. Social Development was pleased to receive the *Labour Force Adjustment Committee Report* which made recommendations to develop a Sector Adjustment Strategy for Home Support Workers in New Brunswick. Social Development looks forward to being invited to participate on working groups to develop an action plan to facilitate the recruitment and retention of home support workers.

15. **Staff persons involved in the planning and/or delivery of disability support programs should receive ongoing training in the concepts of person-centered approaches.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

The new Disability Support Program will include a training component and those involved in the planning and/or delivery of the programs will be expected to participate in work related training and development opportunities as required.

- 16. Necessary disability supports should be equally available throughout the province including rural and francophone areas as well as urban and anglophone areas for all age groups and for all types of disabilities.**

- *Department of Social Development*
- *Executive Council Office*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

With the introduction and provincial roll-out of the new Disability Support Program, the Government of New Brunswick is striving to fulfill its commitment to establishing a provincial strategy on disabilities with flexible programming and services for eligible adults with disabilities. The Disability Support Program will be rolled-out province wide by 2010.

- 17. The Departments of Health; Education; Justice; and Social Development; and the regional health authorities should hold a public consultation with consumers and community stakeholders to develop a comprehensive provincial mental health strategy.**

- *Department of Health*
- *Department of Social Development*
- *Department of Education*
- *Department of Justice & Consumer Affairs*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

New Brunswickers are being involved in developing a provincial health strategy with public consultations that began in the fall of 2008 under the direction of Judge Michael McKee. New Brunswickers could also submit their ideas via a web-based consultation posted on the government of New Brunswick website at www.gnb.ca.

The new provincial health plan calls for a review of current mental health services in order to examine strengths and gaps.

Among the documents to be reviewed include *Out of the Shadows at Last*, which is a national report on mental illness headed by Senator Michael Korby and the *Connecting the Dots* report on youth at risk and youth with complex needs from the provincial Ombudsman and Child and Youth Advocate, Bernard Richard.

18. The government of New Brunswick should move quickly to address the recommendations made in the 2007 *Premier's Community Non-Profit Task Force Report* to assist community agencies in becoming more effective partners in responding to the needs of persons with disabilities.

- *Office of the Premier*
- *Executive Council Office*

Response to date from lead department:

The Government of New Brunswick appointed a Minister responsible for Community Non-Profit Organizations and created a new Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat who would be responsible for coordinating responses to the *Blueprint for Action* report.

In March of 2008, the Government released a report titled *Delivering on the Blueprint – The Government's Response to Blueprint for Action*.

Further work on efforts to implement the recommendations are still underway.

POVERTY

19. **The current rates for social assistance are not adequate to cover essential living expenses. A cost of living escalator similar to the one used with Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits should be established to automatically increase the social assistance rates on an annual basis.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

Under *Charter for Change* the government has made a commitment to raising the social assistance rate to the average for Atlantic Canada. Many additional benefits are available to clients to assist with expenses such as the health card, fuel supplement, disability supplement and medical transportation. Exemptions under the household income policy allows for persons with disabilities to share accommodations and receive separate social assistance cheques.

20. **When applicants are requested to participate in a household financial “means test” to determine eligibility for assistance, the process should allow for consideration of current household income but also consider reasonable current legitimate household expenses. The financial assessment of the “means test” must be fair and flexible enough to recognize that legitimate expenses can vary considerably in different households and in different individual circumstances.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

The Standard Family Contribution Policy was designed to ensure that clients who are able to contribute to their long-term care services will contribute at least a nominal amount, unless their income is at or below income assistance levels. Only income is considered when determining client contribution for long-term care. Important changes have been made to this policy by Government periodically to ensure fairness and equity. These changes include the 2005 exemption of non-liquid assets and the 2006 exemption of all assets.

The calculation of client contribution is based on a graduated income scale to ensure that factors such as family composition and circumstances are taken into consideration. If an individual disagrees with the determination of their contribution to long-term care services, they may request an Administrative Review of the decision. A request for temporary client contribution adjustment may be submitted if a client is in serious financial hardship and where payment of the client contribution would result in the inability of self, spouse or dependent to pay for:

- Adequate food
- Monthly mortgage/rent
- Sufficient home heat
- Prescribed medication
- Other required prescribed health care

21. **The Department of Social Development should review their policies around the annual Disability Supplement. They should consider such options as pro-rating the annual amount to be added to the monthly benefits paid to the eligible recipients and allowing persons who receive Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits to continue to receive the Disability Supplement when their CPP benefits rise to offset their continued eligibility for basic provincial social assistance benefits.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

The issue of pro-rating the annual Disability Supplement amount to be added to monthly benefits has been brought to our attention by various stakeholder groups. Arguments have been presented to the advantages and disadvantages of changing the annual disability supplement. This recommendation will be taken into consideration.

22. **The province needs to consult with the federal government to harmonize the allowable contribution limits and use of funds sheltered under the new federal Disability Savings Plan and provincial rules around trust funds for the benefit of persons with disabilities.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

The Department of Social Development will take this recommendation into consideration when reviewing policies related to the Standard Family Contribution Policy and Family Income Security Act.

- 23. The Department of Social Development must allow clients in any category of provincial social assistance to be eligible for the same amounts of allowable earnings before their monthly benefits are reduced.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

The commitment to increase the amounts of allowable earnings that can be retained by social assistance clients who work casual or part-time is a commitment in *Charter for Change*. A review of increasing the allowable earnings for clients in the Transitional Assistance Program to the same amounts as for clients in the Extended Benefits Program and Interim Program will be undertaken.

- 24. The application process and eligibility criteria should be improved so that more persons with serious long term chronic health conditions or disabilities can be certified as disabled enough to qualify for the disability supplement under the Extended Benefits category of social assistance.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

The eligibility criteria to be certified Blind, Deaf or disabled is based on a definition which is legislated under the Family Income Security Act. The Department has currently done a review of the Medical Advisory Board and certification process and is making recommendations to improve the application process.

- 25. Social assistance policies need to be changed to allow persons with chronic disabilities to share accommodations with other persons without having their benefits reduced based on the income of the other persons in that household who are not related and are not engaged in a conjugal relationship.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

A person with a chronic disability who has a medical report which covers a 24 month period and has a long-term needs designation, and is presently exempt from the household income policy.

EDUCATION

- 26. The Department of Education should continue moving forward with the implementation of the recommendations of the MacKay Report on inclusive education.**

- Department of Education

Response to date from lead department:

MacKay recommendations continue to be pursued and are woven throughout *When Kids Come First* (WKCF), including many for which no timeframe was proposed by MacKay.

- 27. The Minister of Education should continue to meet annually with the Minister's Advisory Committee on Inclusive Education to provide a forum for stakeholder groups to jointly provide feedback and be updated on issues around the implementation of inclusive education initiatives.**

- Department of Education

Response to date from lead department:

The Ministerial Committee on Inclusive Education (MCIE) is an important venue for input and discussion among stakeholders and departments. Meetings will continue to be held at least annually.

- 28. The public education system must have the flexibility to respond to students as individuals and to provide the specific supports that may be required for them to be successful in their learning experience.**

- Department of Education

Response to date from lead department:

This is the intention of the definition of inclusive education and the integrated services model which the department is developing with the Ministerial Committee on Inclusive Education (MCIE).

- 29. The Department of Education will ensure that appropriate training is provided to all staff and volunteers in the education system so that they are able to meet the needs of students with disabilities.**

- *Department of Education*

Response to date from lead department:

This is in keeping with several MacKay recommendations and is considered critical. It will require training by and for staff of other departments as well. The scope and process for attaining this objective will be formulated with input from the Ministerial Committee on Inclusive Education (MCIE).

- 30. Students with disabilities must also have reasonable access to extra curricular activities associated with schools and not just the academic vocational or recreational opportunities delivered during regular school hours.**

- *Department of Education*

Response to date from lead department:

This message has previously been communicated to school districts. As the system continues to increase its capacity to meet the needs of students with disabilities it will also become more sensitized to barriers and opportunities to address this issue.

- 31. Public schools must work with students with disabilities, parents, and other resource people as required in order to adequately prepare them for a successful transition on to post-secondary education or directly into employment or other options in the community.**

- *Department of Education*

Response to date from lead department:

The department is working on this in partnership with a number of stakeholders. Typically, these efforts have addressed the needs of students in grades 9-12. New initiatives will begin as early as kindergarten (e.g., Planning Alternate Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) training).

- 32. Specific education support strategies are necessary to address certain students with such specific disabilities as autism spectrum disorders, learning disabilities, Deafness, blindness, etc. Input from parents should be welcomed and encouraged.**

- Department of Education

Response to date from lead department:

Provincial Autism and Learning Disabilities Strategies are being developed and implemented in consultation with stakeholder groups which include and represent parents. Planning for individual students must always include parents.

- 33. We need to increase the number of students who attend and complete studies at post-secondary educational programs.**

- Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour
- Department of Education

Response to date from lead department:

This is being reviewed under the School – Career Pathing exercise that the provincial government (Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour is the lead) is undertaking.

Third party service providers wishing to introduce the provision of transition to employment or post-secondary education to individuals in high school are encouraged to expand services to these students. Also, future third party service contracts could be reviewed with the intention of introducing transition services at the high school level.

NBCC – policy 420 7P permits students who require extra time to be accommodated this encourages more students to transition into post-secondary.

- 34. Regular reporting and accountability measures must be in place with students and parents so they can track the progress of individual educational plans and outcomes for students with disabilities.**

- Department of Education

Response to date from lead department:

When Kids Come First (WKCF) includes a number of measures to improve in this area. The department is currently exploring approaches with school districts to address this need.

- 35. The Department of Education shall continue to host at least two meetings a year of the Dialogue on Education Committee to provide a forum for representatives of community disability groups to share information and discuss issues that impact on the quality of education for students with different disabilities. The Department of Education should be represented from both the Anglophone and Francophone divisions of student services on a permanent basis on this Dialogue on Education Committee.**

- Department of Education

Response to date from lead department:

The Department plans to continue its bi-annual meetings of Dialogue in Education Committee. It remains to be determined whether this committee should become one bilingual forum or whether two should exist.

- 36. Services to students who are Deaf or hard of hearing and for students who are blind or visually impaired that are delivered through the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) should be continued.**

- Department of Education

Response to date from lead department:

The MacKay consultations indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the services delivered via the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA). There are no plans to modify the manner in which these services are provided.

Francophone services are also well-received as delivered by the department and there are no planned changes at this time. These services are delivered by the Department to ensure their availability in French.

- 37. The Minister of Education should act to confirm licensing requirements for all future teachers in New Brunswick to include a required component course dealing with students with disabilities to be taught by a competent instructor who has experience in teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom.**

- *Department of Education*

Response to date from lead department:

Both sectors are working with universities to address this issue through existing committees.

- 38. The Department of Education must adopt a policy that when a student is suspected of having a serious learning disability, they must not have to wait more than three months to have a professional assessment arrangement which will include identifying the problem and offering a plan with options to accommodate the learning disability. The assessment report and program plan ideas will be copied immediately for the parent/guardian of the student and the lead classroom teacher involved with that student.**

- *Department of Education*

Response to date from lead department:

The learning disabilities strategies under development in both sectors are strengthening the capacity of classroom teachers and other personnel to recognize signs of learning disabilities and to plan appropriate interventions which are tracked via the Special Education Plan (SEP). A web-based screening tool targeting pre-school children is also under development. This may flag learning disabilities among other needs.

When Kids Come First (WKCF) requires SEPs to be in place by kindergarten entry for students with identified needs. This will reduce the number of students whose needs are undetected.

Timelines for external assessments must be addressed with Social Development and Health.

- 39. Students who have been identified as requiring the services of a speech language pathologist should get timely access to assessments and adequate and timely speech language services as prescribed.**
- *Department of Education*
 - *Department of Health*

Response to date from lead department:

We consider this essential. This is included in the work on the integrated services model.

- 40. Policies and funding need to be in place to respond in a timely fashion to the personal support needs of individuals with disabilities involved in post-secondary education or training programs.**
- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*
 - *Department of Social Development*
 - *Department of Education*

Response to date from lead department:

This item was previously addressed within the Ministerial Employ-Ability Action Group.

New Brunswick Community College has established a team to coordinate support services and provide assistive technology.

A review was conducted of TESS (Training and Employment Support Services for Persons with Disabilities) support services and it was concluded that these supports are available under our programming. It is important that all relevant documentation is submitted to ensure no time delays.

- 41. Appropriate resources including effective vocational counselling and vocational assessment resources where needed must be readily available to assist a person with a disability in understanding viable options to choose from for training and career planning that do not unnecessarily restrict their choices. These services require an understanding of different disabilities and labour market requirements.**
- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*
 - *Department of Education*
 - *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

A review will be conducted of all EAS (Employment Assistance Services) service providers to determine if all providers possess this resource.

Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL) EAS coordinators will be reminded that each contract for the service providers must include a clause stating that “These services require an understanding of different disabilities and labour market requirements.” This professional development is currently under service delivery agencies’ existing contracts.

- 42. The programs working to improve literacy levels in New Brunswick must develop a strategy to improve overall access and use of their services by persons with various types of disabilities.**

- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*
- *Department of Education*

Response to date from lead department:

Arrangements are made on a case by case basis for persons with disabilities to access the program. Literacy is currently conducting a review to ascertain how each region is accommodating clients.

- 43. The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission must prepare and release a status report on current levels of barrier free access to post-secondary facilities by students with disabilities.**

- *Department of Education*
- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*

Response to date from lead department:

We would expect the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Committee (MPHEC) to take the lead on this.

Post-Secondary Affairs of the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL) will be sending a letter to New Brunswick institutions requesting a report on the accessibility of their facilities.

New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) facilities will be toured and reviewed by the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons to ensure accessibility.

44. **All post-secondary institutions who receive either provincial government funding and/or are eligible for students to receive government funded student aid, should be required to report annually on the numbers of students with disabilities served in the past year as well as their specific plans on how to increase the rate of participation and successful completion of studies by students with disabilities.**

- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*

Response to date from lead department:

Student Financial Services is able to track the number of students applying and approved under Adaptive Technology Services. These numbers are currently available in Public Accounts (2006-2007) including the total funding provided.

311 post-secondary students received funding via Canada Access Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities, 151 post-secondary students received funding through a Canada Study Grant for the Accommodation of Students with Permanent disabilities.

45. **The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour should reactivate the Program Advisory Committee on Training Services for Persons with Disabilities to work with community stakeholders to increase the number of students with disabilities who are able to attend and successfully complete programs offered at the N.B. Community Colleges.**

- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*

Response to date from lead department:

The New Brunswick Disability Executives' Network has been acting as such in the absence of the Advisory Committee. It has been working well.

EMPLOYMENT

46. The province of New Brunswick must announce a staffing plan to increase the representation of qualified persons with disabilities in the civil service. This should include new persons coming in, opportunities for promotion of those already employed, and also to explore the possibility of home-based employment links. Positions should be spread out over both entry level and management level jobs. We are concerned with the retention of jobs for employees with disabilities.

- *Office of Human Resources*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

The Office of Human Resources will be introducing a Workplace Equity and Diversity (WED) Policy in 2008-09. The policy objective is to facilitate the inclusion, retention and progression of Aboriginals, persons with disabilities and members of a visible minority group into the NB public service. The policy will help educate and promote awareness amongst managers and employees on the benefits of workplace equity and diversity as well as on the tools available to them. (Supporting policies such as *Teleworking in the Public Sector*.) This WED policy will help government prepare for the future labour force by integrating and facilitating the development of qualified designate group members into its workforce. In support of this initiative, sensitivity awareness training has been developed with the participation of key stakeholders and is currently offered to employees.

The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program continues to be offered. The EEO program helps place equality designated group members in term positions at all classification levels and also offers designated group students government summer jobs. Program innovations include; offering on-line registration through e-recruitment, using a "General Support Worker" classification for individuals with a learning or intellectual disability, granting registrants eligibility to apply for in-service competitions, and permitting the conversion of EEO term positions into regular positions.

OHR recently launched the "Faces of the Public Service" campaign as part of an overall recruitment and retention strategy. This involves a re-design of our career fair booth, job advertisements, and website to position GNB as an

employer of choice. The campaign is currently underway and will reflect the variety of careers available in the public service and be an accurate representation of government employees (i.e.: including persons with disabilities).

Persons from the designated groups, including persons with disabilities, are included in any recruitment initiatives that we are responsible for such as the Public Service Internship Program and any Executive Development Programs.

- 47. An ongoing public awareness campaign is necessary to help break down the myths and stereotypes about hiring persons with disabilities and to encourage diversity in the workplace as a good business decision.**

- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*

Response to date from lead department:

This item is addressed within the Ministerial Employ-Ability Action Group – recommendations: A public tender was released to provide a service to employers and conduct this established campaign.

- 48. Community agencies providing job placement services for persons with disabilities on government contracts should be given extra credit for serving clients with more complex levels of disabilities in determining whether they are meeting their successful job placement targets.**

- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*

Response to date from lead department:

This item is addressed with the Ministerial Employ-Ability Action Group – recommendations: A new, broader definition for “job placement” was introduced to record successful results for the targets.

- 49. All government funded employment related programs must be required to report the consolidated number of job placement outcomes each year that assisted a persons with a disability that was considered serious enough to be a factor in their employment options. They must also distinguish between short term and long term placement.**

- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*

Response to date from lead department:

The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour will include this by program in future annual reports document for the department.

50. Programs and policies related to training and employment between different provincial government departments needs to be harmonized in order to break down silos and to provide more effective supports to persons with disabilities seeking employment.

- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*
- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

This activity has been reviewed under Ministerial Employ-Ability Action Plan item #25. A committee was struck and various gaps in service were identified. Changes made as a result of this committee:

- TESS possesses flexibility to serve clients, i.e.: longer duration.
- TESS services expanded to include those students 16 years of age or older for summer employment supports.
- TESS added job crisis intervention services.
- EAS (Employment Assistant Services) service providers able to include high school clients to assist them to prepare to transition to employment or post-secondary, upon graduation.

51. Changes need to be made in current social assistance policies to facilitate successful transition from social assistance to successful permanent attachment to the labour force on either a part-time or full-time basis.

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

Under the Transition to Work initiative, the Department is presently exploring strategies that will facilitate successful transitions from social assistance to the labour market. Strategies would include interventions and benefits that will support skills acquisition and encourage clients to find and retain full-time or part-time employment.

52. The government of New Brunswick in cooperation with community stakeholders needs to continue to develop and implement a coordinated and comprehensive employment strategy specific to the needs of persons with disabilities.

- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*
- *Department of Education*
- *Department of Social Development*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

The N.B. Disability Executives' Network (NBDEN) could work directly with the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour and invite the Department on a bi-annual basis to provide them with any updates. Each of the other Departments involved could be provided with similar opportunities to update NBDEN as well.

HOUSING

- 53. The provincial and federal governments need to work in partnership to provide additional funding support to non-profit housing organizations to increase the number of affordable and accessible housing units in New Brunswick.**

- Department of Social Development

Response to date from lead department:

Since the introduction of the Affordable Rental Housing Program in 2004, the Department of Social Development has worked closely with community based non-profit organizations and private entrepreneurs to develop approximately 110 new disabled accessible units. The majority of these disabled units are now occupied. Housing for persons with disabilities remains a high priority for housing proposals considered for development under the program.

- 54. The provincial and federal governments need to work together to increase the overall number of rent subsidies so that persons with disabilities will be able to afford private rental accommodations.**

- Department of Social Development

Response to date from lead department:

The design of the Affordable Rental Housing Program includes the provisions of a capital grant, coupled with rent subsidies to ensure rents remain affordable to low income tenants. Rent Supplements may also be available to assist low income disabled households who occupy existing residential rental properties.

- 55. Along with the increased availability of affordable and accessible housing options, we need to see enhanced availability of disability support programs to enable persons with different disabilities to remain in their own homes instead of being placed in more expensive residential facilities.**

- Department of Social Development

Response to date from lead department:

The primary goal of the Long Term Care Program is to enhance the natural support system of the individual, thus enabling the person to remain in his/her own home as long as possible.

In keeping with this goal, the Government, in its *Charter for Change*, re-established the maximum number of hours of home support in the Long Term Care Program to 215 hours per month.

In August, 2007, the Department of Social Development and the Department of Health jointly announced new initiatives to improve access to long-term care services. These initiatives are intended to provide caregivers and individuals with alternate care options and include additional hours (up to 336 hours per month) of home support services for individuals who require additional assistance with daily living to remain at home.

Social Development has also concluded the DSP pilot projects in Regions 3 & 4 and has changed these to permanent sites for the new Disability Support Program. Provincial roll-out of the program will occur in stages between now and 2010. This is on keeping with the government's commitment to establishing a Provincial Strategy on Disability Issues, including flexible programming and services.

- 56. Effective supports must be in place to enable consumers or families with severely disabled family members to keep that member at home or in the community. We must give attention to the problems faced by aging parents who want to ensure that their adult children will be adequately cared for when the parents are no longer able to do so. Nursing home placements must not be the only option available especially for younger adults.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

Social Development has established its new Disability Support Program which will help its residents access flexible programming and services and to prevent unnecessary admission to nursing homes. The primary goal is to enable the person to remain in his/her own home as long as possible and as independently as possible.

- 57. The province of New Brunswick must consult with community stakeholders to design and implement an independent Residential Quality Assurance pilot program to monitor residential services for persons with disabilities.**

- Department of Social Development

Response to date from lead department:

As a preliminary step, we have developed a new comprehensive inspection process for residential services. We remain committed to consulting with community stakeholders regarding departmental programs.

- 58. Measures such as income tax deductions and additional grants or low-interest loans for homeowners need to be available to enable persons who become disabled through injury, illness, or aging to remain in their own housing as long as possible.**

- Department of Social Development

- Executive Council Office

Response to date from lead department:

The Department has always recognized persons with disabilities (physical, mental, intellectual) as a high priority group. Grants are available to homeowners and owners of residential rental properties to improve the accessibility of the dwelling for disabled occupants/tenants. Under a joint funding agreement with the Federal Government \$3.8 million dollars has been provided over the last 5 years to approximately 500 households in order to improve the accessibility of their homes for disabled occupants. Funding is also available for homeowners to modify their property to create a secondary/garden suite for adult persons with disabilities.

- 59. Developers and architects should be encouraged to go beyond the current minimum building code requirements for barrier free design features when remodelling existing housing projects and in the design of new housing initiatives to allow for aging in place.**

- Department of Public Safety (New Lead Department)

- Department of Local Government

- Department of Environment

Response to date from lead department:

The Department of Public Safety is preparing to go to government with their proposal to enact a New Brunswick Building Code Act. The proposed Building Code Act would allow for all building related actions (design, construction, occupancy of new buildings and structures, the alteration, reconstruction, demolition, removal, relocation and, occupancy of existing buildings and structures, and change of use or occupancy) except planning, to be amalgamated into one piece of legislation. The resulting proposed legislation would address recommendations that are currently listed as responsibilities under Department of Public Safety, Department of Local Government and the Department of Environment. This legislation will provide a framework for a more consistent approach to building code administration, application, inspection, interpretation, enforcement, and education in the province.

Developers, architects and other associations can be encouraged to go beyond minimum code requirements but the authorities having jurisdiction can only enforce the minimum standards. The proposed Chief Building Inspector would liaise with these associations to promote and encourage barrier free design.

- 60. The provincial Restigouche Hospital Centre in Campbellton needs to be replaced with a brand new facility capable of handling forensic and criminal patient assessments and their custodial housing as well as offering safe, healthy, and appropriate housing for chronic mental health patients living at that facility. There should also be efforts made to allow chronic patients to leave the hospital to obtain alternative housing in the community with the necessary supports.**

- *Department of Health*
- *Department of Supply and Services*
- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

Construction of a new provincial psychiatric hospital to replace the Restigouche Hospital Centre was announced December 18, 2007. Meanwhile, work will continue on a new 20-bed forensic unit and a two-bed seclusion area at the Restigouche Hospital Centre as the need for additional forensic space cannot wait for the new hospital to be completed. The new unit is scheduled for completion by June 2008.

- 61. Persons receiving social assistance benefits should be allowed to live with non-family members without losing their social assistance benefits based on the income of the other persons living in that household. We should encourage homeowners to rent rooms or other options such as basement apartments to clients living on social assistance.**

- Department of Social Development

Response to date from lead department:

Under the current Household Income Policy the Department does allow for rent and boarding situations.

62. The government of New Brunswick must improve Section 3.8, Barrier-Free Design of the National Building Code through regulation. The Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons in consultation with a stakeholder committee has identified Schedule “C”, Section 3.8 Barrier-Free Design of the *Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations* as a model code for New Brunswick to follow with some possible additions to be considered.

- *Department of Public Safety (New Lead Department)*
- *Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) will become Lead Department when the proposed Building Code Act is proclaimed. The Building Safety Advisory Committee that was appointed by DPS to make recommendations on the proposed Building Code Act is not opposed to enhancements in barrier-free requirements; however, they felt very strongly that the province should not make provincial amendments to any of the technical requirements of the National Building Code through changes in provincial regulation.

The province should address any issues with the National Building Code (NBC) through the established national code development process. DPS represents New Brunswick on Provincial Territorial Policy Advisory Committee on Codes (PTPACC). PTPACC has barrier-free access in its “Priority Code Development Policy Areas” for the next code cycle (2010).

63. The Department of Environment must create a permanent Universal Design Advisory Committee to provide advice on sector-specific and general public education programs to support the effective implementation of universal design standards; provide a means for ongoing public input into barrier free requirements and other duties as deemed necessary. Members of the Universal Design Advisory Committee must include a cross-section of leaders from the disability community, government, and the private sector, with the majority of members being people with disabilities.

- *Department of Environment*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

The Department of Environment is working closely with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) on the development of a provincial Building Code Act. When the proposed Act is proclaimed, Public Safety will be establishing a permanent advisory committee that will be comprised of stakeholders from government, private sector, municipalities, etc. to provide guidance on any issues/topics related to the proposed Building Code Act. DPS is recommending that a representative of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons be appointed to the proposed permanent Building and Fire Safety Advisory Committee. That representative can bring forward recommendations from the Universal Design Advisory Committee.

- 64. The government of New Brunswick must develop a process whereby the most recent version of the *National Building Code* automatically becomes the minimum standard for all municipalities, rural communities, local service districts, etc. Any subsequent improvements to the Code must also be immediately adopted on a province-wide basis.**

- *Department of Public Safety (New Lead Department)*
- *Department of Local Government*
- *Department of Environment*

Response to date from lead department:

The proposed Building Code Act will provide for province wide adoption of the National Building Code. One of the Building Safety Advisory Committee's recommendations to Government was to request permission to explore a different method of code adoption than is currently in place.

- 65. The Department of Public Safety must create the position of "Chief Building Inspector". This "Chief Inspector" position must be able to accept and act on complaints received by the general public. They must also have the power to apply punitive measures in situations where building code requirements were not met.**

- *Department of Public Safety (New Lead Department)*

Response to date from lead department:

Please refer to the response to recommendation #59 which will bring these issues under the responsibility of the Department of Public Safety as soon as the proposed New Brunswick Building Code Act is brought to the legislature in 2009.

- 66. The Department of Public Safety must develop and implement standardized training and licensing requirements for local building inspectors.**

- *Department of Public Safety*

Response to date from lead department:

This item will be addressed in the proposed New Brunswick Building Code Act. Building inspectors in New Brunswick will be qualified as per the minimum criteria prescribed in the proposed regulation under the Building Code Act.

- 67. The Department of Public Safety must empower local inspectors with the authority to apply punitive measures in situations where building code requirements were not met.**

- *Department of Public Safety (New Lead Department)*

Response to date from lead department:

Please refer to the response to recommendation #59 which will bring these issues under the responsibility of the Department of Public Safety as soon as the proposed New Brunswick Building Code Act is brought to the legislature in 2009.

- 68. The Department of Public Safety must implement procedures whereby failure to fully comply with building code requirements in a timely manner would result in mandatory orders to correct deficiencies along with potential financial penalties.**

- *Department of Public Safety (New Lead Department)*

Response to date from lead department:

Please refer to the response to recommendation #59 which will bring these issues under the responsibility of the Department of Public Safety as soon as the proposed New Brunswick Building Code Act is brought to the legislature in 2009.

69. **The Department of Supply and Services must formalize their policy of using the latest CSA barrier-free design standards for use in provincial government owned or leased buildings.**

- *Department of Supply and Services*

Response to date from lead department:

Supply and Services has a formalized CSA Barrier Free policy that is adhered to. It is the “CAN/CSA-B651-04 Accessible Design for the Built Environment” from the Canadian Standards Association.

70. **In consultation with the federal officials responsible for the *National Building Code of Canada*, the government of New Brunswick must clearly define what is considered a major renovation in the building code. It is already stated that *major renovations* must follow code requirements, but it is unclear exactly what is meant by a *major renovation*. This is a serious flaw in the current system allowing some builders to skirt existing building code requirements because there is no easy way to define a major renovation.**

- *Department of Public Safety (New Lead Department)*
- *Department of Environment*
- *Department of Local Government*
- *Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

The issue is in the interpretation of the National Building Code. The proposed Building Code Act establishes a Chief Building Inspector, Appeal Board and requires Inspectors to be qualified and to conduct mandatory inspections. A web based public repository of appeal board decisions as well as increased stakeholder education was included in DPS’s proposal. These provisions together will aid in reducing differences in interpretation of the National Building Code.

The National Research Council, who author and publish the Code, and the Provincial Territorial Policy Advisory Committee on Codes, have listed this item as a priority for inclusion in the 2010 National Building Code.

71. **Commercial, retail and residential property owners, should be encouraged to renovate existing properties in order to meet the growing demand for barrier free public facilities and buildings that are accessible for potential customers, tenants, employees, and visitors.**

- *Department of Local Government*
- *Department of Environment*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

The Department of Local Government will work with the Business Improvement Areas (BIA's) to increase awareness and encourage retail and residential property owners to meet the growing need for barrier free public facilities and buildings that are accessible for potential customers, tenants, employees and visitors.

TRANSPORTATION

72. **The government of New Brunswick should establish a new program modelled on Nova Scotia to offer partial financial assistance to non-profit community organizations to help offset their operating costs for approved community based transportation services for persons with disabilities and for seniors.**

- *Department of Transportation*
- *Executive Council Office*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

The NB Department of Transportation has maintained a policy of not providing operational funding for transportation service. Capital funding continues to be available through the Department's Vehicle Retrofit Program and a new rural to urban commuter program.

73. **The province should conduct a public education campaign to encourage the general public to remember to offer transportation to family members, neighbours, and friends who have disabilities and do not have their own vehicles.**

- *Department of Social Development*
- *Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport*
- *Department of Transportation*

Response to date from lead department:

The goal of the supports programs within the Department of Social Development is to enhance and not replace the natural support system of the individual. The Department supports this recommendation.

74. **Government should expand programs to offer subsidized bus passes and taxi credits to enable more persons with disabilities and seniors with low incomes to have access to available public transit, community transportation options, and taxi services while still keeping the costs affordable to those in need.**

- *Department of Social Development*
- *Executive Council Office*

Response to date from lead department:

We remain committed to undertaking program reviews and assessing the programs and services that are offered to clients. As part of larger departmental strategy the issues noted in the recommendation may be examined.

- 75. The province of New Brunswick must continue to support the provincial driver assessment and education service at the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation for persons with disabilities to return to driving following becoming disabled, or for new drivers who are likely to require special adaptations to drive safely and comfortably despite their disability.**

- *Department of Transportation*
- *Department of Health*
- *Department of Public Safety*

Response to date from lead department:

The Adaptive Driving Program continues to be available through the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation. The Department of Transportation provides funding under the Vehicle Retrofit Program towards the cost of eligible accessibility features for vehicles.

The Department of Public Safety partners with both the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation and Service New Brunswick. An Occupational Therapist completes a driver assessment and reports the findings to the Department of Public Safety. Driver testing is then completed by a Service New Brunswick Driver Examiner, under the authority of the Registrar of Motor Vehicles.

- 76. The Vehicle Retrofit Program with the Department of Transportation should be continued with a larger budget to cover all current eligible applications from persons needing to adapt a vehicle in order to transport persons with disabilities.**

- *Department of Transportation*

Response to date from lead department:

The Vehicle Retrofit Program has been available since 1988. The demand on the program varies from one year to another. In 2006-07 all eligible applications were funded. In 2007-08, 85% of the eligible applications were funded.

- 77. The government of New Brunswick should encourage all public and private transportation carriers to recognize the need to ensure that their vehicles, buses, trains, ferries, etc. are barrier free to persons with disabilities and seniors.**

- *Department of Transportation*

Response to date from lead department:

Recognizing that accessibility is a key consideration in transportation, the Department of Transportation supports this recommendation.

- 78. The government of New Brunswick should review the September 2005 report prepared by the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons titled "*Are We There Yet?*" *Transportation for Persons with Disabilities and/or Older Adults Living in New Brunswick* to adopt a provincial transportation strategy on this issue especially to address lack of transportation options in the rural areas of the province.**

- *Department of Transportation*

- *Executive Council Office*

- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

In August 2007, the New Brunswick Minister of Transportation wrote to all mayors in New Brunswick advertising of the establishment of a new rural to urban commuter program wherein interested parties could apply for capital funding to initiate new rural to urban commuter services within the Province.

- 79. Municipalities must be encouraged to use provincial legislation and municipal by-laws to actively enforce parking spots for registered permit holders for persons with disabilities. The Department of Public Safety should send out an annual letter on this topic and produce a statement for the media to indicate how many municipalities have their own additional by-law on this matter.**

- *Department of Public Safety*
- *Department of Transportation*
- *Department of Local Government*

Response to date from lead department:

In June 2008, the Department of Public Safety forwarded letters to all municipalities requesting their support in increasing public awareness related to designated parking spaces for the disabled. To assist the municipalities a sample by-law, copy of a brochure and the link to the DPS website were included.

In addition, Department of Public Safety officials worked closely with the Association of Municipal Administrators of New Brunswick. The Association sent queries to all municipalities to determine the number of municipalities who have by-laws designating parking spaces for the disabled. Only 25 municipalities responded to the queries and indicated that:

- eleven municipalities do not have a municipal traffic by-law for designated parking spaces;
- seven municipalities indicate that zoning by-laws under Rural Planning establishes designated parking spaces;
- five municipalities indicate they do have a municipal by-law which includes designated parking spaces;
- two municipalities are currently drafting municipal by-laws which will include designated parking spaces.

RECREATION/WELLNESS

- 80. The government of New Brunswick in conjunction with Recreation New Brunswick and their Inclusive Recreation Committee, should assist the existing disability sport and recreation sector in building/strengthening partnerships with community facilities and provincial organizations to help “open doors” and educate recreation providers regarding barriers to participation.**

- Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport

Response to date from lead department:

The Sport and Recreation Branch of the Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport (WCS) currently works with Recreation New Brunswick (RNB) towards these objectives. The branch is also planning on working with provincial sport organisations by putting together an education/awareness session. RNB has also hosted a second provincial “Recreation Your Way” event, a one day event that encourages participants to try a variety of sport and recreation activities, with funding through the Active Community Grant program (ACGP). WCS will continue to support RNB as they now plan to develop a community approach to “Recreation Your Way”.

- 81. The Department of Education must increase the level of structured physical education in the public school system at all grade levels to be delivered by trained physical education specialists with an emphasis on physical activity and active living skills that can be carried on outside of the school setting when the student is no longer at school. This is especially important for students with disabilities to be included and to teach other students how to think inclusively.**

- Department of Education

Response to date from lead department:

Phase 1 of *When Kids Come First* (WKCF) indicates the department will “Develop a Physical Education and Activity Action Plan designed to meet the target of providing 150 minutes of quality physical education and activity per week.”

WKCF also requires that “... *and range of physical education activities in schools is available and invitational for students with disabilities.*”

Work is under way on both. For example a session delivered by a specialist in the adaptation of physical education held recently will enable physical education mentors to work with teachers to improve inclusive physical education.

The francophone sector will begin by determining teacher needs including resources and training needs.

- 82. All recreational facilities should be universally designed to be barrier free for persons with disabilities. Some financial support should be available to help offset costs related to improving accessibility to such community facilities.**

- Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport

Response to date from lead department:

The Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport (WCS) currently offers funding in regions for minor accessibility upgrades to community facilities (approximately \$1,500 per region). Design and accessibility of facilities should be addressed by other departments or agencies. WCS does not have programs to fund major infrastructure costs.

- 83. Any program relating to sport recreation or wellness that requests funding from the province should be required to outline what they have done and what other measures they plan to do in order to increase the number of participants, spectators, volunteers or employees, who are persons with disabilities.**

- Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport

- Executive Council Office

Response to date from lead department:

All provincial sport and recreation programs have been reviewed to see how persons with a disability could be included. Groups can apply to the following programs and the program guidelines are inclusive: Active Community Grant program, Hosting assistance, Official Languages program, High Performance Athlete Assistance program as well as Active Kids programs. However all applicants to these programs are not required to outline what they do to be inclusive.

In addition, the Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport (WCS) asks their provincial sport organisations, through the annual funding process, if they promote the inclusion of persons with a disability. Funding is awarded based on a scoring system.

WCS, through the training mentioned in #80 above, will work closely with Recreation New Brunswick and others to offer ongoing education to Provincial Organizations so that they have the necessary tools needed to address inclusion for all.

- 84. Financial assistance should be made available to persons with disabilities on limited incomes to help them with the direct costs required to participate in recreation and active living programs to cover such expenses as admission/membership fees, equipment and transportation.**

- *Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport*
- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

Financial assistance is available for persons with a disability through the “Canadian Tire Jumpstart” program and through “Kids Sport” and “Pro Kids”. These programs target kids only. The Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport (WCS) has received a request from Recreation New Brunswick (RNB) for an “Access Fund” to assist all persons with a disability to be active in sport and recreation in their communities. RNB may use their annual funding from WCS for this purpose.

- 85. The province should provide funding for a full time community person hosted by Recreation New Brunswick to promote awareness and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in sport and recreation programs across the province.**

- *Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport*

Response to date from lead department:

Recreation New Brunswick has made this request to the Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport and have met with senior officials. More discussion on this matter will be required.

- 86. The government of New Brunswick has long recognized the importance of health promotion and prevention initiatives. We would like to see a summary that outlines specifically what the government of New Brunswick is doing and would like to do over the next year to reduce the number of birth defects, illnesses, and injuries that lead to chronic disability and improve the health and wellness of mothers-to-be.**

- *Department of Health*
- *Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport*
- *Department of Public Safety*

Response to date from lead department:

As part of the Early Childhood and Youth Strategy, the Department of Health will develop a New Beginnings Program that will focus on reproductive care initiatives designed to foster the health and well-being of expectant mothers, newborns and their families.

Program enhancements will include public awareness and education strategies to promote knowledge related to health lifestyles and healthy nutrition practices prior to conception and expansion of the prenatal component of Early Childhood Initiatives.

- 87. The Department of Health must release a public discussion paper on their views and responses to the issue of severe chemical and environmental sensitivities/allergies.**

- *Department of Health*

Response to date from lead department:

This complex issue is not part of the Department of Health's plan for 2008-2011.

- 88. The government of New Brunswick must ensure that all persons with any type of disability will have equitable and timely access to specialized health and rehabilitation services required due to their disability.**

- *Department of Health*

Response to date from lead department:

The Department of Health continues to work towards ensuring, equitable and timely access to health care services for all New Brunswickers, including persons with disabilities.

- 89. The Department of Health needs to place additional efforts to develop coordinated services for the prevention and/or treatment of mental illnesses especially for children and youth, brain injury survivors, fetal alcohol syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, spinal cord injuries, degenerative neurological disorders, Alzheimer's Disease, and other under serviced conditions.**

- *Department of Health*
- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

A comprehensive Mental Health strategy will be developed in NB and an Addiction strategy is in the final stages of being submitted to government for approval. The review of provincial mental health services is currently underway under the independent leadership of Judge Michael McKee.

OTHER TOPICS

90. **The government of New Brunswick and the government of Canada need to work together with the other stakeholders to generate current and longitudinal data collection on statistics and outcome measures related to citizens with disabilities.**

- *Department of Finance*
- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*
- *Department of Social Development*
- *Department of Education*

Response to date from lead department:

The Federal-Provincial Fiscal and Statistical Relations Branch of the provincial Department of Finance will continue to cooperate with the federal government in sharing economic and demographic data concerning New Brunswick. Arrangements are made on an ongoing basis to release appropriate data to the public and other interested stakeholders.

91. **Greater emphasis be given to creating more consistent funding mechanisms and funding levels for needed social and economic research related to disability issues. Perhaps universities, community colleges, professional associations, businesses, community groups, and government should pool their resources to design and fund needed research.**

- *Department of Education*
- *Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission*
- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*
- *Department of Health (N.B. Medical Research Fund)*
- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*

Response to date from lead department:

Anglophone Division:

The Department is exploring the creation of a research consortium with several universities. This could be an avenue to promote research of this nature. Also, a proposal for a research chair in inclusive education is under consideration. This would also serve to focus funds and interest in pertinent research areas.

It is suggested that the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons lead the proposed effort via a Memorandum to Executive Council to Board of Management requesting a dedicated fund and that the Council convene a steering committee to set priorities and administer the fund.

Francophone Division:

The department continues to exchange with the University of Moncton the information regarding the research and the formation connected to the services for student with disabilities in order to identify the priority research areas. The Learning Innovation Funds established during the 2008-2009 school year and which will continue during the next year, offers the opportunity for the researchers of the University of Moncton to associate with schools to carry out projects of action research.

92. **Government departments with services or programs open to persons with disabilities must ensure that policies and eligibility criteria are made publicly available through such mediums as websites, the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons' *Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick*, media releases, and regular updates to key community groups.**

- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*
- *Department of Social Development*
- *Executive Council Office*

Response to date from lead department:

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons continues to maintain a comprehensive directory of both government and non-profit community services available to persons with disabilities living in New Brunswick. The information is regularly updated online and annual print copies are distributed as well. This information is also available in alternate formats if requested.

The Premier's Council also distributes information likely to be of interest to key contacts linked to disability issues by using email distribution lists.

For more information, please go to the website at www.gnb.ca/0048 or call 1-800-442-4412.

We are pleased to note that websites for various provincial government departments have significantly improved the quality of information posted on their public websites.

They are also communicating more often with different community disability organizations.

93. The government of New Brunswick must work in conjunction with the aboriginal community and other stakeholders to address the specific issues around access to services for aboriginals with disabilities wherever they live in the province.

- *Minister Responsible for the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat*
- *Executive Council Office*
- *Department of Social Development*
- *Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour*
- *Department of Health*

Response to date from lead department:

The Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat (AAS) has looked at the *Disability Action Plan Strategy* Report and has offered some initial feedback.

It was the intent of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons that the issues outlined in the report would be applicable to all citizens with disabilities living in New Brunswick. There was input provided from some stakeholders from the First Nations' community as the report was being developed.

It was also recognized that there were some particular complications related to the different jurisdictions involved with on reserve; Band Chiefs and Councils; the provincial government; and the federal government. This is why this recommendation was included in the report to draw specific reference to the need for improved cooperation and coordination of services required by aboriginals living with a disability in New Brunswick.

AAS have suggested that it would be appropriate for the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons to engage in a further separate consultation session or focus group with First Nation representatives to discuss their perspective on disability issues in relation to the report. They suggested inviting First Nation health directors, social workers, housing officers, welfare officers, consumers, etc. to be part of that First Nations' consultation session.

Their feedback could be used to develop an additional component to the responses of the *Disability Action Plan Strategy*.

It was also noted by AAS that the “*Mi’kmaq and Maliseet – New Brunswick Relationship Building/Bilateral Agreement*” is intended for the Province of New Brunswick (PNB) and First Nation parties to work together in good faith, and on a government to government basis, in order to resolve bilateral issues, such as jurisdictional issues regarding access to PNB services, through a process of discussion at the working groups level and then through a process of negotiations at the Technical Negotiations Committee level.

To date, the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons has not been involved with the Bilateral process. The Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons may want to consider participating at the bilateral level on certain Roundtables such as Health or Social Development to ensure that the Council obtains First Nation involvement and input regarding the disability issues that First Nations are confronted with on a daily basis.

The Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons agrees with the suggestions made by AAS. AAS would support any proposal the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons wanted to put forth to cabinet in order to host a separate consultation session for First Nation representatives. We also request that the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons be considered for future participation meetings held under the “*Mi’kmaq and Maliseet – New Brunswick Relationship Building/Bilateral Agreement*” when the meetings are considering disability related topics.

94. **That the online availability of the Premier’s Council’s *Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick* and their other information resources be promoted to all government departments and agencies.**

- ***Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons***

Response to date from lead department:

Every provincial department listed in the various information directories prepared by the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons are contacted annually to have them review the content of any material listed under that department.

When the annual updates are completed, the Premier's Council issues a media release to remind everyone that the Directory is available.

The Council also published a general brochure with contact information, which is widely distributed at various workshops, training meetings and educational seminars to remind front-line workers. The material is also distributed to government employees and others through an email distribution system.

95. The Minister of Supply and Services promote standards of technology and software within government that will be compatible with that required for access by various types of disability users such as blind or visually impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing, intellectual disabilities, etc.

- *Department of Supply and Services*
- *Service New Brunswick*

Response to date from lead department:

While no formal policy exists, Supply and Services maintains a mode of operation which allows for disabilities to be accommodated on a case by case basis. Internally the Government of New Brunswick (GNB) has standardized on technology that can be extended/adapted to help address the accessibility needs of staff.

Externally, Service New Brunswick (SNB) has no formal policy with regards to "accessibility" to the public. They are looking to Supply & Services for leadership. In cooperation with Communications New Brunswick, the Department of Supply and Services and departments/agencies strive to incorporate the W3C (Worldwide Web Consortium) Accessibility Guidelines for all GNB public websites. Best practices in website development are communicated regularly.

Increased communication on "accessibility" issues among all parties involved will foster and increase awareness. This awareness should focus on all purchase/design decisions, as well as the implementation of new software, technologies and training.

96. **The Premier's Council should pursue a campaign to encourage government and private sector information providers to accommodate the needs of persons with vision difficulties in choosing the size and font of print used for public information (i.e.: telephone directories, labeling of prescription and over-the-counter drugs, government forms, food, packaging, etc.).**

- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

Response to date from lead department:

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons has made some contacts with various private sector companies on this topic. It has been difficult to identify the appropriate decision making authorities to address this issue.

It is the intention of the Premier's Council to seek the support of other disability advocate organizations as well as groups representing senior citizens to see if we can generate more visibility to this issue and more collective pressure for action.

97. **The province must work in conjunction with the federal government to improve assistance with the costs of disability related supports (i.e.: refundable tax credits, etc.).**

- *Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons*

- *Department of Intergovernmental Affairs*

- *Department of Finance*

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons was part of a public campaign which led to a new federal Registered Disability Savings Program that will provide both income tax benefits and some matching federal funds for those who are able to participate in this program.

We will continue to look for further opportunities to support stronger income tax benefits for individuals and families dealing with long term disability expenses.

We have also requested that the provincial Department of Social Development move to harmonize their policies on trusts for persons with disabilities with the new federal programs.

- 98. Government must encourage community capacity building and voluntary service by enacting “Good Samaritan” legislation to limit liability and to develop other mechanisms to support volunteers for out of pocket expenses. Training, screening, recruitment, and coordination costs, etc. for volunteers should be supported by government.**

- *Department of Social Development*
- *Department of Justice and Consumer Affairs*

Response to date from lead department:

The Department of Social Development has indicated that their response is pending. This issue may be addressed by the Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat as well.

The Department of Justice has advised that consideration of legislation in this area would likely have to involve the Law Reform Branch of the Attorney General’s Office.

- 99. The government of New Brunswick must seek information on current insurance industry practices relating to the coverage of claims for accidents and for long-term disability. Some insurance companies seem to off-load responsibilities by accessing public or community resources. The issue of coverage for persons with pre-existing conditions also needs to be reviewed. We must ensure reasonable access to health insurance for all citizens whether employed or not.**

- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

This recommendation should be assigned to Departments of Justice and Health.

- 100. Government must ensure that the privacy of personal health, financial, or other private information collected about individuals with disabilities is kept private and is only used for the purposes approved by the person involved. Violations should be consistently enforced.**

- *Department of Health*
- *Department of Social Development*

Response to date from lead department:

The Government of New Brunswick will be developing new personal health information legislation.

APPENDIX A PREMIER'S COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF DISABLED PERSONS

Who are we?

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons is a body for consultation and study, which was created to advise the provincial government on matters relating to the status of persons with disabilities. The Council reports directly to the Premier of the Province.

Responsibilities

The Act governing the Premier's Council states that the Council shall advise the Minister on matters relating to the status of persons with disabilities; shall bring before the government and the public matters of interest and concern to persons with disabilities; shall promote prevention of disabling conditions; shall promote employment opportunities of persons with disabilities; and shall promote access by persons with disabilities to all services offered to the citizens of New Brunswick.

Structure

The Council consists of a Chairperson and twelve other members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. Provisions in the Act guarantee representation by regions, agencies working on behalf of persons with disabilities and the public at large.

Activities

To carry out its functions, the Council will receive briefs and suggestions from individuals and groups concerning the status of persons of any age with disabilities of any type; undertake research on matters relating to persons with disabilities; recommend programs concerning the status of persons with disabilities; make referrals to and consult and collaborate with universities and individuals on matters which affect persons with disabilities; propose legislation, studies and recommendations as the Council considers necessary; appoint special committees when needed; maintain an information library on subjects related to persons with disabilities and on any services/programs likely to be of interest to persons with disabilities; and offer advice and/or intervention in cases where persons with disabilities are having difficulties in gaining access to needed services.

APPENDIX B DEFINITIONS OF TERMINOLOGY

In 1980, the World Health Organization issued the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (ICIDH) in accordance with Resolution (WHA29.35) of the World Health Assembly. ICIDH terminology refers to three concepts: impairments, disabilities and handicaps defined as follows:

Impairment - "any loss or abnormality of a psychological, or anatomical structure or function". Impairments are disturbances at the level of the organ.

Disability - "any restriction or inability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being." This describes a functional limitation or activity restriction caused by an impairment. Disabilities are descriptions of disturbances in function at the level of the person.

Handicap - "any disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal for that individual." The classification of handicap is a classification of circumstances that place individuals "at a disadvantage relative to their peers when viewed from the norms of society." The classification of handicap deals with the relationship that evolves between society, culture and people who have impairments or disabilities, as reflected in people's life roles.

*(International Classification of Impairments,
Disabilities and Handicaps: World Health
Organization)*

Disability supports are:

- any good
- or any service

which assists a person in overcoming barriers to carrying out activities of daily living, or to achieve social (includes political and cultural activities) and economic participation.

A good or service becomes "disability related" when it is used to assist a person or persons in overcoming barriers associated with a disabling condition.

(Roeher Institute)

Equality - the values inherent in the concept of equality include self-determination, autonomy, dignity, respect, integration, participation and independent living.

(In Unison, 1998)

Universal Design - An approach to the design of products, services and environments to be usable by as many people as possible regardless of age, ability or situation. Universal design strives to be a broad-spectrum solution that helps everyone, not only people with disabilities.

Barrier-free - This phrase is not intended to be limited to a description of physical accessibility to a building. We are talking about creating open and supportive environments where all citizens are welcome and have the supports and features necessary to allow them to be fully included as participants in all public programs, services and facilities.

Consumer - We are referring here to either a person with a disability or to the parent, guardian or advocate responsible for making decisions about a person's personal care and support services if that person is not legally capable or competent to do so. This is not to imply that a person with a disability is only a consumer. Persons with disabilities should be involved in choices that will affect the quality of life they will be able to enjoy.

APPENDIX C STATISTICS ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

STATISTICS ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES – DECEMBER 2006

Notes:

- The population covered by the survey was persons residing in private and some collective households in the ten provinces and three territories. Persons living in institutions and on First Nations reserves were excluded.
- Please visit the [Statistics Canada website](#) for more statistics concerning individuals with disabilities.

Definition of Disability:

“...any restriction or lack of ability (resulting from impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.” – World Health Organization

Number of Persons with Disabilities by Province:

New Brunswick

Total population – 711,440

Total number of persons with disabilities – 122,540

Disability rate – **17.2%**

Canada

Total population – 30,893,640

Total number of persons with disabilities – 4,417,870

Disability rate – **14.3%**

Number of Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick Households, 2006:

Age: 0 - 14 years

Both sexes ¹ - 4,680

Male – 3,090

Female – 1,590

Age: 15 - 24 years

Both sexes ¹ - 4,970

Male – 2,450

Female - 2,510

Age: 25 - 44 years

Both sexes ¹ – 18,850

Male – 8,400

Age: 45 - 64 years

Both sexes ¹ – 47,160

Male – 22,970

Female – 24,190

Age: 65 - 74 years

Both sexes ¹ – 20,920

Male – 10,320

Female – 10,610

Age: 75+ years

Both sexes ¹ – 25,970

Male – 10,270

Female – 10,440

Female – 15,700

Highlights:

- Disability increases with age: just 4.0 percent of children under 15 years of age experience some level of disability, compared to 14.3 percent of adults aged 15 to 64, and more than 45% among persons aged 65 and over.
- Severity of disability also increases with age: only 1.4 percent of children had a severe or even very severe disability, compared to 17.5 percent of those aged 65 and over.

Nature of Disability:

Canada

Mobility – 9.5%

Agility – 9.5%

Hearing – 4.2%

Seeing – 2.7%

Pain – 2.4%

Learning – 2.4%

Psychological – 2.1%

Speech – 1.8%

Memory – 1.6%

Developmental – 0.6%

Unknown – 0.4%

New Brunswick

Mobility – 11.6%

Agility – 11.1%

Hearing – 5.5%

Seeing – 3.1%

Pain – 3.0%

Learning – 3.0%

Psychological - 2.2%

Speech – 2.4%

Memory – No number given

Developmental – 0.8%

Unknown - 0.5%

Adapted from *Statistics Canada – The 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey: Disability in Canada*. Catalogue # 89—628-XIE – No. 3.

¹ The sum of the values for each category may differ from the total due to rounding.

² Applies to persons aged 15 years and over.

³ The Canada total excludes the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Revised July 2008

APPENDIX D INDEX OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS RESPONSIBLE

DEPARTMENT	Lead Department		Supporting Department	
	Rec. #	Page	Rec. #	Page
Education	26	27	17	21
	27	27	33	29
	28	27	40	32
	29	28	41	32
	30	28	42	33
	31	28	52	38
	32	29	90	58
	34	29		
	35	30		
	36	30		
	37	31		
	38	31		
	39	32		
	43	33		
	81	53		
	91	58		
Environment	63	44	59	41
			64	45
			70	47
			71	47

DEPARTMENT	Lead Department		Supporting Department	
	Rec. #	Page	Rec. #	Page
Executive Council Office			1 2 6 16 18 58 72 74 78 83 92 93	12 13 15 21 22 41 49 49 51 54 59 60
Finance	5 90	14 58	97	63
Health	12 17 60 86 87 88 89 100	19 21 42 56 56 56 57 64	13 39 75 93	19 32 50 60
(N.B. Medical Research Fund)			91	58
Intergovernmental Affairs			97	63
Justice and Consumer Affairs			17 98	21 64
Local Government	71	47	59 64 70 79	41 45 47 51

DEPARTMENT	Lead Department		Supporting Department	
	Rec. #	Page	Rec. #	Page
Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission			91	58
Minister Responsible for the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat	93	60		
Office of the Premier	1 2 3 4 6 7 18	12 13 13 14 15 15 22		
Office of Human Resources	46	35		
Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour	33 40 41 42 44 45 47 48 49 50 52	29 32 32 33 34 34 36 36 36 37 38	43 90 91 93	33 58 58 60

DEPARTMENT	Lead Department		Supporting Department	
	Rec. #	Page	Rec. #	Page
Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons	92	59	1	12
	94	61	2	13
	96	63	3	13
	97	63	4	14
			5	14
			6	15
			7	15
			8	17
			10	18
			12	19
			13	19
			16	21
			17	21
			46	35
			52	38
			62	44
		63	44	
		70	47	
		71	47	
		72	49	
		78	51	
		91	58	
Public Safety	59	41	75	50
	62	44	86	56
	64	45		
	65	45		
	66	46		
	67	46		
	68	46		
	70	47		
	79	51		

DEPARTMENT	Lead Department		Supporting Department	
	Rec. #	Page	Rec. #	Page
	Service New Brunswick			95
Social Development	8	17	12	19
	9	17	17	21
	10	18	40	32
	11	18	41	32
	13	19	50	37
	14	20	52	38
	15	20	60	42
	16	21	84	55
	19	23	89	57
	20	23	90	58
	21	24	92	59
	22	24	93	60
	23	25	97	63
	24	25	100	64
	25	25		
	51	37		
	53	39		
	54	39		
	55	39		
	56	40		
	57	41		
	58	41		
	61	43		
	73	49		
	74	49		
	98	64		
	99	64		

DEPARTMENT	Lead Department		Supporting Department	
	Rec. #	Page	Rec. #	Page
	Supply and Services	69 95	47 62	60
Transportation	72 75 76 77 78	49 50 50 51 51	73 79	49 51
Wellness, Culture and Sport	80 82 83 84 85	53 54 54 55 55	73 86	49 56