



# Disability Income Support Coalition (DISC)

## DISC Members

Autism Resource Centre

Autism Treatment Services

Canadian Association for  
Williams Syndrome

Canadian Deaf Blind and  
Rubella Association (CDBRA)

Canadian Mental Health  
Association (Saskatchewan  
Division) Inc.

Canadian Parapelegic  
Association (Saskatchewan) Inc.

DAWNing Saskatoon

Epilepsy Saskatoon

FASD Support Network of  
Saskatchewan Inc.

IDEA Regina

Metis Family and Community  
Justice Services of Saskatchewan

North Saskatchewan  
Independent Living Centre  
(NSILC)

People First of Saskatchewan

People with disabilities

Phoenix Residential Society

Regina Anti-Poverty  
Ministry(RAPM)

Saskatchewan Association for  
Community Living (SACL)

Saskatchewan Association of  
Rehabilitation Centres (SARC)

Saskatchewan Brain Injury  
Association (SBIA)

Saskatchewan Down Syndrome  
Society

Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of  
Hearing Services

Saskatchewan First Nations  
Network on Disabilities, Inc.  
(FSIN)

Saskatchewan Voice of People  
with Disabilities

Schizophrenia Society of  
Saskatchewan

South Saskatchewan  
Independent Living Centres  
(SSILC)

## Media Release

August 21, 2007—For Immediate Release

### Poverty of People with Disabilities Ignored in the Disability Framework

This week, the Government of Saskatchewan is holding community discussions about their recently released Disability Inclusion Policy Framework. **The Saskatchewan Disability Income Support Coalition (DISC) is concerned that the framework ignores the deep, pervasive and life-long poverty that so many people with disabilities face.** The message that DISC members will bring to the government forums on August 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> is that people with disabilities deserve an adequate, separate income program that meets their financial needs.

“Some DISC members are boycotting the discussions because of lack of consultation and lack of action on key issues such as poverty,” says Dionne Miazdyck-Shield, DISC member. “As a group, DISC members share the frustration that the greatest ‘impact of disability’ that people with disabilities experience is poverty, and that has been ignored by the framework.”

“In the framework, the only strategy to get people with disabilities out of poverty is employment, which is good for some, but is not the solution to poverty for the majority of Saskatchewan citizens with disabilities,” says Bev Duncan, DISC member and Executive Director of the Voice of People with Disabilities. “By the government’s own account, 77% of the long-term “static” welfare caseload are people with disabilities. People with disabilities want and need to work but also need a flexible, secure safety net for when they can’t work.”

Dave Nelson, DISC member and Executive Director of Canadian Mental Health agrees. “We are challenging the government to commit to working with DISC to create an income program that works for people with disabilities, one that gets them out of poverty. As a group we maintain that the Low Income Cut-Off Line (LICO) is a reasonable, sustainable, fair place to start. The average income in Saskatchewan in 2001 was \$36,000 and the LICO is only half of that, that’s all we’re asking for. Saskatchewan is a have province and it’s time that people with disabilities benefited from the economic growth.”

DISC is expecting that any plan or framework to improve the lives of people with disabilities will address poverty as a first step. We want to work with government in a collaborative, full partnership to develop a new income support program for people with disabilities. An effective, fair income program for people with disabilities must include the following elements:

- An adequate base amount that meets the LICO line;
- Rapid reinstatement for people with disabilities who leave for work, but periodically need financial support;
- Separation from the social assistance program, as welfare was never meant to be a solution for people with long-term needs;
- Higher earnings exemptions for those who are able to work part-time.
- Provides hope and financial security
- Person-centred, user friendly and consistent in implementation.

DISC wishes to publicly call for a clear and immediate plan to take people with disabilities off of welfare and create a new, distinct and adequate income program that will meet their needs. DISC is calling on people with disabilities. Their families and interested citizens to write to their political representatives and express their agreement that people with disabilities should not be condemned to life-long poverty.

**For More Information Contact: Bev Duncan at (306) 949-4188 or Dionne Miazdyck-Shield at (306) 955-3344.** DISC is a coalition of over 25 disability organizations and people with disabilities who are advocating for a distinct, adequate income program for people with disabilities in Saskatchewan.