



August 4, 2015

Dear Editor,

Subject: **DISC requests government to renew commitment to assist people with disabilities**

In 2011, Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall stated it was the government's "vision and goal to make our province the very best place in Canada to live for those with disabilities." Since that time, the provincial government has increased funding to the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program, which has made a significant difference in the lives of people throughout the province who have severe and long-term disabilities. The current level of funding per month for a person with a disability is approximately \$1,300.

Unfortunately, the cost of living is continuing to escalate beyond the increases to SAID. That is why the Saskatchewan Disability Income Support Coalition (DISC) is asking the government to renew its commitment by increasing SAID funding by \$250 per month per person. We already know that low oil prices are beginning to have an impact on the province's economy and that impact is even more significant among Saskatchewan's most vulnerable populations. Whether it means finding an accessible apartment, paying for a mobile device which provides security and connection to community, paying for paratransit, or covering the extra cost of medication and food not already covered under the program, it doesn't take long for SAID funds to disappear.

By increasing SAID funding by \$250, the government will be providing people with disabilities with the financial ability to cover the costs of the basic necessities to live. We realize the challenges the government faces in balancing the budget each year, but a commitment to increasing funding on an incremental basis will provide a source of hope for the thousands of people in this province who have a disability. A survey by one of our member organizations, the Canadian Mental Health Association, discovered that over 88 per cent of Saskatchewan residents believe people with disabilities should receive \$1,600 or more per month. This indicates there is significant public support for this issue.

On behalf of DISC, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation for the support we have received from the provincial government in recent years. We look forward to continuing to work together to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live with a disability.

Yours sincerely,

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