

New AISH Act and Regulations in Effect

On May 1, 2007, the new AISH Act and Regulations were brought into effect. "These positive improvements to the AISH program will be helpful to AISH recipients," says Margot Brunner-Campbell, ACCD's president of the board of directors.

Some of the changes to the AISH program include:

- » A \$50 increase in the maximum monthly living allowance
- » More flexibility regarding the frequency of income reports
- » More clarity around eligibility for *modified AISH*
- » Provisions to ensure clients can exhaust all appeal mechanisms when assessed an overpayment, before the program begins collecting a debt
- » Improved tone and language of the legislation

A booklet, called *Improving AISH*, contains information about the changes and about the AISH program in general. As well, the AISH Guide has been replaced with a series of AISH tip sheets. These tip sheets focus on the following topics:

- » AISH Facts
- » Eligibility for AISH
- » Treatment of Income and Assets
- » Employment Income
- » AISH Health Benefits
- » AISH Personal Benefits
- » Living in a Facility
- » Applying for AISH
- » Reporting Changes
- » Overpayments and Debts
- » Appealing a Decision
- » Office Locations
- » Terms Used in AISH

The *Improving AISH* booklet and the tip sheets are available on the Alberta Seniors and Community Supports Services website at www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/AISH. Or you can contact an AISH office and have a copy sent to you.

Canada Creates Disability Savings Plan

When the federal government announced its budget in March 2007, the disability community eagerly anticipated news on a Disability Savings Plan. Our anticipation was rewarded when we learned that Canada had become the first country to create a Disability Savings Plan.

Bev Matthiessen, ACCD's executive director, commented on the plan saying, "Many parents of children with disabilities have been working long and hard to have this legislation in place. It will be a great relief to them to know that when they pass on they can leave their children with disabilities with some financial resources."

Disability organizations across the country have been educating the government on the need for such a plan for many years. We felt our voices were heard when, in July 2006, Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty appointed an expert panel to examine the issue of financial security for children with severe disabilities.

In December 2006, the panel submitted its report, entitled *A New Beginning*, to the Finance Minister, recommending a three-part plan that outlines the need for a disability savings plan, a disability savings grant, and a disability savings bond. All three recommendations were included in the budget announcement!

The Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) will be available starting in 2008. PLAN, a Vancouver-based, non-profit organization that has been "promoting the creating of a Disability Savings Plan for nearly five years" outlines several benefits of the RDSP. It will:

- » Permit family members to make financial contributions to relatives with disabilities, both during their lifetimes and upon their deaths, without penalty under provincial programs
- » Recognize families' financial contributions with a tax incentive
- » Increase the standard of living and improve the quality of life of Canadians with disabilities
- » Encourage future planning and self-reliance for Canadians with disabilities

For information, links, and Q and A sheets on the RDSP, visit the PLAN website at www.plan.ca. ACCD will provide updates as more information becomes available.

Home Care Funding Ceiling Removed

On May 16, Alberta Health and Wellness announced its support for the MLA Task Force on Continuing Care recommendation to remove the \$3,000 monthly funding ceiling for home care services.

The announcement states: "Eliminating the funding cap for home care clients, particularly for higher need clients, will allow more Albertans to stay in their communities with their family and friends while still receiving the care services they require."

Responding to the announcement, ACCD President Margot Brunner-Campbell said, "Removing the cap will support people with disabilities to live independently in their communities and at the same time save money for the government as living in the community is generally less expensive than living in a care centre."

Bursary Application Deadline Only Weeks Away

It's not too late to apply for ACCD's Education for Life Bursary. The application deadline is June 30, 2007.

If you have a disability and plan on upgrading your education as a first-time, post-secondary student, you may be eligible for a bursary ranging from \$300 to \$800. Details and an application form can be found on ACCD's website at www.accd.net. Or you can contact the ACCD office by calling (780) 488-9088 in Edmonton or toll free at 1-800-387-2514. We look forward to hearing from you!

Focus on Fundraising

ACCD is thrilled to announce this year's primary fundraising event—the 2007 *Champagne In The Showroom!* This after-work mixer will feature amazing entertainment, fantastic food and terrific prizes! What can you expect on September 20?

- » A fashion show featuring Emma Scott Designs & The Colony Clothing Company with shoes by enPrivado
- » A fantastic assortment of hors d'oeuvres and desserts to tempt the palate
- » Entertainment by one of Edmonton's up and coming jazz vocalists Lyndsey Manyluk
- » A \$500 gift certificate from the Colony Clothing Company as a door prize

As well, this year's silent auction is shaping up to be the best yet! So far, items include a catered dinner party at your own home, a weekend at the Jasper Park Lodge, his and her "pocket-rocket" mini-bikes, his and her spa treatments at Pleiades Massage & Spa at the Hot Springs in Banff, and much much more. You'll even have the chance to win a one-year lease on a 2007 Mercedes B-Class!

Mark September 20 on your calendar! You don't want to miss the 2007 Champagne In The Showroom, hosted by David Morris Fine Cars. Call Don at (780) 488-9088 for more information and tickets.



Together, We Hold The Power!

Full Participation - Accessibility - Equity