

## **Tax Fairness Closer for People with Disabilities: Thanks to new report**

By: Deanna Groetzinger, Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

Toronto, December 16, 2004 – Tax fairness for people with disabilities in Canada is closer thanks to a comprehensive report released December 15.

“The *Disability Tax Fairness* report provides solutions that are practical and do-able right now. We ask that the government of Canada act quickly to implement the recommendations in the report by the Technical Advisory Committee on Tax Measures for Persons with Disabilities,” said Deanna Groetzinger, vice-president, communications, Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, one of a number of national organizations in the Coalition for Disability Tax Credit Reform.

“We are very pleased that the Technical Advisory Committee listened to Canadians with disabilities and the organizations that represent them. Our coalition will continue to monitor how and when the government follows through on the 25 recommendations,” added Max Beck, executive director, Easter Seals/ March of Dimes National Council. The recommendations in *Disability Tax Fairness* seek to achieve a fairer and more responsive tax system for people with disabilities.

- A crucial recommendation is that the Canada Revenue Agency takes steps to ensure that people, who have severe and prolonged impairments that have intermittent signs and symptoms, are eligible for the disability tax credit (DTC).
- The committee also recommended that the wording “perceiving, thinking and remembering” as an activity of daily living be replaced with the term “mental functions necessary for everyday life.”
- Another important recommendation expands the eligibility for people who have restrictions in two or more basic activities of daily living if the restrictions have a cumulative effect.
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“The recommendations in *Disability Tax Fairness*, if implemented, would make a major impact on the lives of many Canadians. It is especially heartening that the committee members recognize that new funding programs, not just tax measures, are a priority to truly benefit Canadians with disabilities,” Ms. Groetzinger said.

The establishment of the Technical Advisory Committee in 2003 grew out of the disability community’s criticism of the government’s increasingly restrictive interpretation of the eligibility requirements for the DTC. The credit provides modest tax relief for people with severe and prolonged disabilities by recognizing the additional costs of living with a disability.

The Coalition for Disability Tax Credit Reform has been the driving force calling for changes in the eligibility requirements of the DTC to ensure tax fairness for Canadians with mental and physical disabilities.

Members of the coalition include: ARCH, Alzheimer Society of Canada, The Arthritis Society, Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance, Canadian Association of Community Living, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, Canadian Mental Health Association, Council of Canadians with Disabilities, Easter Seals/ March of Dimes National Council, Family Association for Mental Health Everywhere, Family Mental Health Alliance, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, Mood Disorders Association of Ontario, Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, National Network for Mental Health, Ontario Brain Injury Association, Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health & Addictions Program, Parkinson Society Canada and Schizophrenia Society of Canada.