

Government Relations Update

National News

To promote a better understanding of the issues affecting people with MS and their families, the National MS Society prepared four position papers examining key government policies and programs:

- Multiple Sclerosis and Income Security: The Need is Now
- The Cost of Caring: Implications for Caregivers
- Continuum of Care: Meeting the Needs of People with Multiple Sclerosis
- Equitable Choice: Ensuring Affordability and Accessibility to Drug Therapies

These papers are available for viewing on-line at www.mssociety.ca. Manitoba Division has been busy working on the priority issues identified on each of the four position papers.

Federal News

To help improve the lives of Canadians living with MS, Manitoba Division met with four Manitoba MPs earlier in the year and addressed the following key issues from the Income Security position paper:

- To redefine Employment Insurance sickness benefits to be more flexible to allow people to work part-time and receive partial benefits
- To make the Disability Tax Credit a refundable benefit
- To allow spouses to claim the Caregiver Tax Credit.

Manitoba News

To enhance the quality of life for Manitobans with MS, efforts are currently underway with MLAs to address the following priority issues:

- To develop and promote age-appropriate supportive housing, congregate care and long-term care homes for Manitobans who can no longer live in their own homes
- To initiate the development of a caregiving strategy focusing on the provision of family support programs including childcare and respite services at a reasonable cost and provision of a support program for caregivers
- To develop an overall strategy as soon as possible that ensures Manitobans have access to all Health Canada-approved drugs such as Tysabri and to increase funding for costly drugs so Manitobans need not spend more than three percent of

family income on prescription medications.

Local News

In light of all the recent discussion about the proposed new football stadium project, the Government Relations Committee is stressing the importance of making this facility accessible to everyone. We are expressing our hope that it will be a requirement of this proposed major new downtown building.