

Government Relations: National Issues

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National Government Relations

- **National Board of Directors**
 - National Government Relations Committee
- **Divisions**
 - Government relations committees
 - Represented on National Government Relations Committee
- **Staff support**
 - Deanna Groetzinger
 - Division staff



Overall Priority Issues

- Income security and supports
- Caregiver supports
- Home care/age-appropriate long-term care
- Access to health care, especially drug therapies
- Research funding/ indirect cost of research
- Support for endMS Campaign

New focus for 2008-2009

- Income security and supports
 - National GR Ctte has agreed to put public focus on this issue for next 12 months
 - Specifically:
 - Make Employment Insurance sickness more flexible
 - Make Disability Tax Credit a refundable benefit
 - Allow spouses to claim the Caregiver Tax Credit

Why this issue?

- Looked at success indicators
 - Govt champion
 - Incoming govt champion
 - Impact of issue on MS Society clients
 - Interest & commitment of other organizations
 - Timing (election, budget, leadership campaign)
 - Opportunity for short-term success (quick win)
 - Media or public awareness

Why this approach?

- Policy change happens when committed people & organizations work together in a focused way
- When the issue is clear & easy to understand by all
- When resources are committed to that issue
- When there is external support from the public and/or media

We will do this by....

- Using the new position papers everywhere and anywhere
- Utilizing an online tool to ask as many people as possible to contact their MPs
- Making income security and our recommendations our main focus in:
 - Meetings with MPs & public officials
 - Briefs to Parliamentary committees
 - Articles in newsletters & on the web

What we have learned so far

- We have all party support
- MPs from all parties responded positively at meetings with NGRC members in March
- Two Conservative MPs have sent letters to Ministers endorsing our recommendations

What we plan to do

- Present the issues to the Conservative Health Caucus on June 3 and ask for support
- Launch a public campaign for support using a web-based tool called Advocacy Online
- Ask MS Society members and volunteers to use the advocacy tool to contact their MPs
- You can help

Upcoming opportunities & tactics

- Continue to use position papers
- Provide input to Finance Committee fall budget consultations
- Continued meetings with officials in Finance, Revenue, Human Resources & Social Development
- Use for election – whenever it is
- Use nationally, divisionally and locally
- Keep our voices strong and united



Other priority issues

We're not forgetting the other issues

- Caregivers supports
 - More recognition of important role of caregivers
- Home care/age-appropriate long-term care
 - Issue in Ontario and across the country
 - Provincial responsibility mainly
- Access to health care/ focus on drug therapies
 - Wait time guarantees include access to MRIs
 - National Pharmaceuticals Strategy

Other priority issues (2)

- Research funding/ indirect cost of research
 - Need more government support of research
 - Include charities in federal indirect cost of research program
- Support for endMS Campaign
 - First ever campaign for MS research training network

**Thank you and
any questions?**

