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VIA E-Mail and Chapter Mail

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Distribution:

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Government Relations and Social Action E-Alert

- **Changes to physiotherapy coverage**
- **Update – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**
- **Government Relations and Social Action E-Alerts Online**

Changes to physiotherapy coverage

On April 1, changes to physiotherapy coverage came into effect. The MS Society can perhaps claim a partial victory since the government announced that OHIP coverage would remain in place for people who are 20 to 64 years old if they meet certain conditions. When the change was announced last year in the Ontario budget, the criteria for qualifying was considerably narrower. Unfortunately, the new coverage does not go as far as we were advocating to Minister of Health and Long-term Care George Smitherman and to MPPs that physiotherapy coverage should be based on a doctor's prescription.

Copies of this E-Alert mailed to chapters will include these Ministry of Health documents: *Changes in Coverage for Physiotherapy Services; Backgrounder – Ontario Government Expanding Physiotherapy Services; Schedule of Designated Physiotherapy Clinics*. This information is posted on the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care website in English and French at www.health.gov.on.ca. An easy way to find the information is to type the word physiotherapy into the search field once you reach the opening page. Information can also be obtained by calling the ministry INFOLine at 1-800-268-1154 or in Toronto 416 314-5518.

Highlights of the new coverage

- OHIP-funded physiotherapy services are available for
 - people 65 and older and 19 and under
 - residents of any age of long-term care homes
 - people of any age who need physiotherapy services in their home (as designated by a doctor or CCAC)
 - people of any age who need physiotherapy after being hospitalized

- people of any age who receive benefits from Ontario Disability Support Program, Family Benefits or Ontario Works

While this is not as expansive a program as we have been advocating, it should be helpful for a number of Ontarians with MS. The MS Society will continue to work with the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care to make them aware of the preventative aspects of regular physiotherapy. It would be helpful as we continue this work, to have feedback from people with MS as they use the physiotherapy services. We would like to know if you are able to quality for the services, and if so, if you are able to access the services in a timely manner.

You can provide feedback to either:

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Update – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Clause by clause examination of Bill 118, the proposed *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act* (AODA), has been wrapped up by the Ontario Legislature's Standing Committee on Social Policy. Once the committee has finished its work, it will send the bill as amended to the Ontario Legislature for third reading debate and ultimately approval. It is anticipated the bill should be passed before the end of this legislative session.

Government Relations and Social Action E-Alerts Online

The Government Relations and Social Action Alert newsletter is available online. This issue and previous ones are posted to the MS Society website. Just go to www.mssociety.ca/ontario and click on Social Action/ Social Action Alert.

Deanna Groetzinger
Vice-President, Communications

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