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VIA E-Mail and Chapter Mail

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Government Relations and Social Action E-Alert

- **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Is Now Law**
- **Online Consultation for Persons with Disabilities**
- **Online Consultation for Caregivers**
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Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Is Now Law

Bill 118, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005* (AODA), is now law in Ontario. It received royal assent on June 14, a little more than a month after its unanimous approval in the Ontario legislature on May 10. The entire act is now in effect, although the act itself is structured to have various stages apply over a 20-year period.

Until standards are in place, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 will remain in effect, and government ministries and other affected public sector organizations continue to have planning obligations in accordance with that legislation

For more details about the legislation, please click on the links below that will take you to a summary posted on the MS Society website in English and French:

<http://www.mssociety.ca/ontario/socact-access-law-jul05.htm>
<http://www.mssociety.ca/ontario/socact-access-law-jul05FR.htm>

Recruitment has begun for the chair, vice-chair and members of the new Accessibility Standards Advisory Council. The deadline for chair and vice-chair applications is **July 29, 2005** while the deadline for council membership is **August 19, 2005**. For more information, click on the links below (English and French) which will take you to the Accessibility Ontario web pages.

<http://www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/index.html>
<http://www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/indexf.html>

According to some sources, the real decision-making power will be with the new standards committees to be formed in the near future. The committees will be empowered to set long-term accessibility objectives as well as five-year targets for achieving them. Keep an eye on the Accessibility Ontario web page for announcements about membership recruitment for the committees. The MS Society will provide updates through the Government Relations and Social Action E-Alerts as well.

As you may have heard, responsibility for implementing the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act has now shifted to Minister of Community and Social Services Sandra Pupatello (MPP, Windsor West) from former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Marie Bountrogianni. Ernie Parsons, (MPP, Prince Edward-Hastings) has been appointed parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Community and Social Services for disability issues. Both Minister Pupatello and Mr. Parsons have been strong advocates for disability matters so the implementation of the legislation should proceed without delay. It will be important to be watchful, however, as the legislation is implemented.

Online Consultation for Persons with Disabilities

Social Development Canada wants to hear from persons with disabilities about the issues that are important and the challenges that are encountered on a daily basis. You can share stories and ideas as well as complete a consultation workbook on line. The consultation will be on the Social Development Canada website until **October 2005**. For more information, click on one of the following links, English or French

<http://sdc-dsc.dialoguecircles.com/Default.aspx?DN=520,32,Documents>

<http://dsc-sdc.cerclesdedialogue.com/Default.aspx?DN=520,32,Documents&l=French>

Online Consultation for Caregivers

Social Development Canada is also sponsoring a consultation for people who provide informal care for their families, neighbours and friends. Again, online participants will be able to share stories and ideas and to complete a consultation workbook. The consultation will be “live” until **July 31, 2005**. Please let people who are caregivers know about this consultation so they can take part, if they wish. For more information, please see the following links, English or French.

<http://sdc-dsc.dialoguecircles.com/Default.aspx?DN=598,32,Documents>

<http://dsc-sdc.cerclesdedialogue.com/Default.aspx?DN=598,32,Documents&l=French>

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.

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Vice-President, Communications

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