



Media Release

**For immediate release – December 3, 2008, International Day for Persons with Disabilities**

**Home Support System Keeps Women and Families in Poverty**

In conjunction with International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women calls on the provincial government to make a clear commitment to eliminate economic and social inequities perpetuated by the home support system in this province.

The theme of 2008 International Day of Persons with Disabilities is 'dignity and justice for all'. Michelle Murdoch, PACSW Board Member and disability activist said, "the home support system in this province, including means testing and assessment, is demeaning for women and perpetuates injustice. The current system keeps women and families in poverty and ensures social exclusion. The means test brings disposable income below poverty levels, ensuring that people do not have the financial ability to participate in community." said Murdoch.

Leslie MacLeod, President of the PACSW said that home support means poverty for the consumer and the provider. MacLeod said that the public is becoming aware of the poverty for home support workers, in terms of low wages, lack of benefits and overall working conditions. What the public is less aware of perhaps is the poverty caused to the consumer who needs to access this program. MacLeod said that means testing for home support ensures that those who are in need of support live below the poverty line.

2008 is a significant year in the international human rights movement given the entry into force on 3 May of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional protocol, legally binding instruments which set out the legal obligations of States to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. Murdoch said that home supports are in opposition to this declaration because the rights of persons with disabilities, in this province, are diminished due to the lack of appropriate home supports and the screening process.

Both Murdoch and MacLeod call on the provincial government for a speedy release of the results of the home support review, and to commit to working with stakeholders to establish a universally accessible, quality, needs based, home support program.

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