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# EASTER SEALS WEB ANNOUNCEMENT

December 3, 2018

**Toronto, ON – 3 December 2018:** Today marks the United Nation’s **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**, an opportunity to examine the physical, social, economic and attitudinal barriers that nearly a billion people around the world face every day. The theme for this year’s IDPD is “**Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.**” According to the latest data released by Statistics Canada, we still has a ways to go before reaching that goal.

Last week, Statistics Canada released the results of the latest **2017 Canadian Survey on Disability** (CSD). The new data points to significant labour and income disparities faced by people living with disabilities. It also serves as a reminder of the ongoing challenges that Canadians living with disabilities face 365 days of the year.

The highlights from the new survey data include:

- An estimated one in five Canadians (or 6.2 million) aged 15 years and over had one or more disabilities that affect them in their daily activities.

- More than 1 in 10 youth in Canada have one or more disabilities. Mental health-related and learning disabilities were most common types of disabilities among youth.
- About one-third of youth with more severe disabilities are neither in school nor employed. 87% had a mental health-related disability, a learning disability or both.
- In 2017, persons with disabilities – particularly Canadians with very severe disabilities, and those with lower levels of education – faced lower employment rates. About 59% of working-aged adults with disabilities were employed compared with around 80% of those without disabilities.
- Almost one-third of working age adults with more severe disabilities are living in poverty. For those living alone, 6 in 10 were below the poverty line.

These statistics speak for themselves and show that individuals with disabilities continue to face significant disparities compared with persons without a disability. The education gap between persons with disabilities remains a real and alarming concern. Disabilities aren't always visible, and include many "hidden-disabilities" such as learning disabilities and mental health-related disabilities.

Low labour participation rates among persons with disabilities point to a need need for more inclusive employment and training opportunities. Further, the fact that more than *a quarter* of people with disabilities *do not* disclose their disability to their employers is a clear indication of the ongoing stigma, discrimination and fear still prevalent in Canadian workplaces.

The data also shows that *chronic poverty* is an everyday reality for people on disabilities and highlights the need for more attention to poverty reduction strategies such as increases to minimum wage, income security through a more robust Ontario Disability Support Program that allows people with disabilities to supplement their earnings without the risk of losing benefits if they earn more.

Easter Seals Canada remains committed to working with persons living with disabilities, community, government and corporate partners to improve outcomes for people living with disabilities.

For more information and to read detailed findings of the survey, visit the Statistics Canada website [here](#).

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