

ACTION ATLANTIC CONGRATULATES NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT FOR TAKING ACTION ON CHRONIC PAIN

August 9, 2006 - Halifax: Action Atlantic is congratulating the province of Nova Scotia for taking action to ease the suffering of chronic pain patients in Nova Scotia.

Action Atlantic is a grassroots advocacy group that lobbies for improved services, better access to care and shorter wait times for chronic pain patients.

Yesterday, the Nova Scotia Department of Health announced an action plan to help individuals suffering from chronic pain. The Minister of Health accepted 17 recommendations from the Nova Scotia Chronic Pain Working Group. The new plan will see \$2 million dedicated over the next two years to creating four new multi-disciplinary pain clinics. In addition, funding has been dedicated to improve pain management education in undergraduate and graduate training programs as well as continuing medical education.

"This is a welcome step in the right direction. We are pleased to finally see government recognizing the importance of this issue. Pain patients have been suffering terribly in this province. People are waiting up to five years for treatment and some have had no access to help at all. We hope this will mean earlier treatment, closer to home, which will help prevent more permanent disabilities. Pain is like cancer - in order to cure it you have to catch it early," says Helen Tupper, President of the Canadian Pain Coalition, Action Atlantic member and chronic pain sufferer.

Action Atlantic has a member on the Chronic Pain Working Group and is pleased to see these recommendations accepted.

"We look forward to seeing these recommendations become a reality in our province. Obviously this won't solve all the problems but we are willing to do whatever we can to support the government in implementing this plan. We want to see this additional funding spent in a manner that benefits as many chronic pain patients as possible," says Ms. Tupper.

Action Atlantic is a non-profit group of patients and healthcare providers working together to improve the treatment of chronic pain in the Atlantic region. The group includes members of the Canadian Pain Coalition, the Atlantic Pain Group and the HRM Chronic Pain Support Group.

It is estimated that 460,000 people in Atlantic Canada suffer from chronic pain. The associated costs of healthcare and lost productivity amount to almost \$7.0 billion per year.

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