NATIONAL ME/FM ACTION NETWORK

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Dear Minister Khera

Re: Canada Disability Benefit

The National ME/FM Action Network welcomes you to the position of Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities.

Our organization represents Canadians with one or both of two chronic disabling conditions: Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (which is often referred to as chronic fatigue syndrome) and Fibromyalgia. The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) shows that close to one million people in Canada have been diagnosed with one or both conditions and that the ME/FM community has high levels of disability, unemployment, poverty, food insecurity, social isolation and unmet needs.

According to the 2015-16 Canadian Community Health Survey, 8% of people aged 18 to 64 with family income below $20k had a diagnosis of CFS and/or FM. The percentage would be considerably higher if non-disabled people were excluded. This means that the ME/FM community is an important stakeholder in working-aged disability poverty discussions.

The Canada Disability Benefit Act states that "*Within six months after the day on which this Act comes into force, the Minister must table in the House of Commons a report that sets out the manner in which the obligation to engage and collaborate with the disability community in relation to the development of regulations has been implemented.*"

Please ensure that the report, due in December, recognizes the ME/FM community as an important stakeholder group and please give the National ME/FM Action Network an appropriate role in the development of the Canada Disability Benefit regulations. We hope to see funding for the Canada Disability Benefit in the 2024-5 federal budget.

Yours truly,

MParlor

Margaret Parlor
President