



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Association Raises Concerns over Cuts**

**HALIFAX (August 17, 2011)** – Physiotherapists in Nova Scotia responded with concern to the recent NDP announcement that social assistance recipients can no longer apply through the Community Services Department for special-needs therapies not covered by MSI or the Pharmacare program.

The decision means that physiotherapy, along with other treatments such as massage therapy and psychological counselling would not be covered under the program. While publicly funded out-patient physiotherapy is available through the hospital system in Nova Scotia, wait times and the need to travel to a hospital location, rather than a community-based private clinic, may not make publicly funded care the best option for many individuals. Also, the funding cuts will force more individuals to access hospital-based physiotherapy care, thereby placing increased pressure on an already over-burdened system.

“While there is plenty of scientific evidence behind physiotherapy’s effectiveness in improving mobility and quality of life for people with disabilities, it is the personal stories told by people who have flourished under a physiotherapist’s care that really underscore the potential impact of these cuts”, noted Christine James, Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Association (NSPA) Executive Director.

In addition to the direct benefits of improving mobility and function, physiotherapy treatment can help to ensure long-term cost savings for the health care system in many different ways, such as ensuring that people can live independently in their own homes longer, preventing the onset of chronic conditions such as diabetes and obesity by keeping people active, and helping people avoid serious injuries, such as hip fractures, through strengthening and improving balance.

By cutting funding for physiotherapy for those on social assistance, already-vulnerable individuals will be at much higher risk for not only a serious decline in their personal mobility and quality of life, but also for experiencing increasingly serious and costly health care issues that could have been prevented with better access to early care. “Cutting access to physiotherapy for those on social assistance may save a few dollars in the short term, but the long-term costs for individuals and for the health care system will be far greater”, noted James.

Physiotherapy is a professional health care discipline directed primarily towards the prevention or alleviation of movement dysfunction. Physiotherapists are skilled in the assessment and management of a broad range of conditions that affect the musculoskeletal, circulatory, respiratory and nervous systems. Nova Scotia’s physiotherapists work in a broad range of practice settings, including hospitals, long-term care and rehabilitation facilities, and private practice clinics.

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#### **For more information and spokesperson interview:**

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