



People with Disabilities Matter

People with disabilities recognized as the Premier includes disability support workers in COVID-19 compensation

(June 2, 2020 - MANITOBA) People with disabilities rely on support staff to help in every part of their life. For years, families, agencies, and support staff have lobbied for increased wages for this essential workforce.

“People with disabilities and their families tell us that their quality of life is only as good as their support staff,” said Margo Powell, Executive Director of Abilities Manitoba. “But this group of essential staff has been underpaid and undervalued for decades – which really means that the people they support, people with intellectual disabilities are the ones being devalued.”

When COVID-19 hit, the disability community became very anxious about the stability of support for a vulnerable population. Quality support is dependent on staff continuing to show up to a risky job when the world is being told to stay home. Thankfully, most did. Which is a testament to the dedication and commitment of staff who work in this field and how deeply they care for the people they support.

“While we have more work to do to ensure that vulnerable people have a stable and well-trained workforce, we are very grateful to the Premier and the Government of Manitoba for including many support staff for people with disabilities in this compensation. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively toward a better and more inclusive community. We will continue to advocate for better wages for all disability support workers as well as essential worker status,” said Powell.

QUICK FACTS:

- Disability support workers are responsible for the health and wellbeing of people with intellectual disability, this includes essential, intimate, personal, and sometimes challenging care, everyday.
- Disability support workers often live below the poverty line and many have more than one job in order to make ends meet.
- Abilities Manitoba along with many partners are calling on the government to demonstrate that they value people with disabilities by valuing their workforce by professionalizing the sector with appropriate training and wages to address the high turnover rates which directly affect the quality of services.
- On average, an adult receiving services will have 770 different support staff in their lifetime.

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Abilities Manitoba is a network of agencies, that exists to foster excellence in services for people with intellectual disabilities.

For more information:

Jennifer Rodrigue
204-803-5781,
jrodrigue@stamant.ca