



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 1, 2019

**CASDA CALLS ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO TAKE LEADERSHIP ROLE ON AUTISM: CANADA NEEDS A NATIONAL ASD STRATEGY**

(Ottawa, ON): Autism Month in Canada kicked off today with the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance (CASDA) releasing a blueprint for a National Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Strategy – calling on the federal government to lead a coordinated approach to address the complex issues pertaining to autism across the lifespan.

“Autism is not just a provincial responsibility or a federal responsibility – it is a Canadian responsibility,” said Senator Jim Munson who hosted the media event. Senator Munson, a long time champion for the ASD community in Canada, was instrumental in the Senate enquiry and final report, *Pay Now or Pay Later: Autism Families in Crisis* (March 2007).

Leading with a vision to make sure all Canadians with autism, as well as their families and caregivers, have full and equitable access to the resources they need across the lifespan, where and when they need it, the blueprint for a National ASD Strategy focuses on three main components:

- Federal leadership facilitating pan-Canadian collaboration that is coordinated and comprehensive with participation from provinces, territories and federal governments
- Immediate federal action in areas of jurisdictional responsibility (access and affordability, housing, sharing of information, employment and research)
- An integrated cross-departmental federal government approach.

“We understand the jurisdictional differences and mandates for provinces, territories and the federal government,” says CASDA Chair, Cynthia Carroll. “That said, the current situation in Ontario is not a problem unique to that Province; every province, every territory, is facing challenges in determining the right levels of supports and the appropriate resources to support people with autism throughout their lives. This is exactly why we need strong, coordinated and comprehensive Canadian leadership by the federal government.”

In advance of the federal election, CASDA will be advocating for a National ASD Strategy to be developed in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, Canadians with ASD, their families and the experts serving and supporting the community.

“There is no question that we have seen some important progress in recent years that we would like to see maintained, but the Canadian autism community needs more,” said Carroll. “Hundreds of thousands of Canadians are on the Autism Spectrum, and the lack of understanding, supports and resources impacts communities and hinders individuals from reaching their full potential. We need a truly national approach, a strategy that puts Autistic Canadians and their families at the centre. We have a blueprint for a National ASD Strategy that can and will get us moving to do just that.”

-30-

**For Information:**

Allison Garber, Communications Consultant, CASDA

[allison@allisongarber.ca](mailto:allison@allisongarber.ca)

(902) 221-5254

Patti Robson, Advisor to Senator Jim Munson

[probson@icloud.com](mailto:probson@icloud.com)

(613) 298-8353