

Purple Day now legally recognized in Canada Act promoting epilepsy awareness receives Royal Assent

Halifax, NS (June 28, 2012) - An Act representing a day to increase public awareness about epilepsy, Bill C-278, has received Royal Assent and is now a legally recognized day for epilepsy awareness in Canada. The Bill establishes March 26 as Purple Day, a day each year when Canadians wear purple to promote a greater awareness of epilepsy and support the 300,000 Canadians living with the disorder. Inspired by Cassidy Megan, Purple Day dispels the myths about epilepsy and helps people living with the disorder understand that they are not alone.

Hon. Geoff Regan, M.P. for Halifax West, wrote the Private Member's, Bill C-278 (The Purple Day Act), in late 2008. Since then, Bill C-278 has progressed through the necessary steps in the House of Commons and Senate, to become law. "The swift passing of this Bill is a meaningful show of support for the 300,000 Canadians living with epilepsy and their families," said Regan.

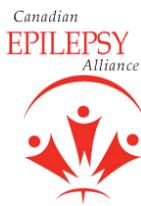
"I am so grateful that Mr. Regan and Parliament believed in me and Purple Day, and showed the 300,000 Canadians living with epilepsy that they care and that we are not alone," said Cassidy Megan, Purple Day founder. "I also want to thank the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia and the other member agencies of the Canadian Epilepsy Alliance for helping me make my dream come true."

According to a survey titled *The Impact of Epilepsy on Canadians*, conducted in late 2011 by Leger Marketing, many Canadians living with epilepsy experience social isolation, work barriers and relationship issues. Over half of the survey respondents (56 per cent) say that restricted independence due to epilepsy is their number one challenge. Stigma, discrimination and a lack of awareness about epilepsy is cited by 38 per cent as the number two challenge, along with the impact of the disorder on their social life. The third biggest challenge facing Canadians with epilepsy is maintaining employment, with half saying their job choices are restricted, and just under 40 per cent unable to get a job if they disclose their condition.

"On behalf of the Canadian Epilepsy Alliance, I would like to thank Mr. Regan for writing the Private Member's Bill and Parliament for passing this legislation," said Deirdre Floyd, Chair of the Purple Day Campaign and Vice-President of the Canadian Epilepsy Alliance. "To my knowledge, this is the only legislation of its kind in Canada. I strongly believe that Purple Day will help to further our national mandate to support public awareness for epilepsy and research for those living with this serious neurological condition."

About Purple Day

Purple Day for Epilepsy is celebrated each year on March 26 and is dedicated to raising awareness about epilepsy. It helps reduce stigma and empowers individuals living with epilepsy to take action in their communities. Purple Day was founded in 2008 by nine-year-old Cassidy Megan of Nova Scotia, and named after the internationally recognized colour for epilepsy, lavender. Purple Day was launched internationally in 2009. The Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia and the Anita Kaufmann Foundation in the United States are the Global Partners for the Purple Day Campaign. For more information, please visit www.purpleday.org and to view Bill C-278, please visit <http://bit.ly/L4cy5u>.



About the Canadian Epilepsy Alliance

The Canadian Epilepsy Alliance (CEA) is a Canada-wide network of 27 grassroots organizations dedicated to the promotion of independence and quality of life for people with epilepsy and their families, through support services, information, advocacy, and public awareness. As the voting member of the International Bureau of Epilepsy (IBE), the CEA is the voice for those living with epilepsy in Canada and internationally. The IBE is the international organization that serves to develop, support and link national epilepsy organizations around the world and exists to improve the quality of life of all people with epilepsy and their families and caregivers. The Canadian Epilepsy Alliance works with the IBE and participates in global initiatives representing those living with epilepsy in Canada. For more information, please visit www.epilepsymatters.com

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For more information, please contact:

Nic Canning
Cohn & Wolfe
647-259-3276
nic.canning@cohnwolfe.ca