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**For Immediate Release**

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**Albertans with Down Syndrome Fearful of Potential Impacts from Reduced Government Supports**

**Calgary, AB -** As Albertans with Down syndrome continue to struggle with the impact of COVID-19, individuals and families are now faced with uncertainty and anxiety over recent news reports that the UCP government may consider cuts to levels of financial supports received through the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program.

Laura LaChance, Interim Executive Director of the Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS), responded by stating that, “Reducing financial support available via AISH would only add to the overall increased lack of and availability of supports for individuals with Down syndrome. The primary role of social benefits is to provide financial aid for basic needs; food, clothing, shelter and utilities for those with lifelong disabilities. As such, the provincial UCP government should publicly commit to plans which include rather than further marginalize Albertans with Down syndrome as they seek independence in life. Mr. Kenny’s government must not further renege on promises made not to cut AISH benefits.”

While the CDSS acknowledges that governments must consider streamlining, automating, and eliminating superfluous costs as they struggle with economic recovery, it must not do that at the expense of any individuals living with a lifelong disability. The CDSS maintains that how a society treats its most vulnerable citizens is always a measure of its humanity, and calls upon all Canadians, and our governments, to protect those who experience social disadvantage in society.

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**About the Canadian Down Syndrome Society:**

*Founded in 1987, The Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) is a national non-profit organization providing information, advocacy and education about Down syndrome. CDSS supports self-advocates, their parents, families and communities through all stages of life, as well as educators and medical professionals who work with individuals who have Down syndrome. Visit* [*http://www.cdss.ca/*](http://www.cdss.ca/) *for more information #SeeTheAbility*