

Improved Access for People with Disabilities can add nearly \$17 billion to Canadian economy by 2030

February 23, 2018 (Vancouver, BC)— Today, the Rick Hansen Foundation is sharing findings of a recent report which demonstrates that improving physical accessibility in workplaces and communities for people with disabilities would result in a dramatic increase in labour force participation and consumer spending.

[*The Business Case to Build Physically Accessible Environments*](#), prepared by the Conference Board of Canada, illustrates the powerful business case for making businesses and public spaces more physically accessible for people with disabilities.

Key findings of the report include:

- The number of Canadians living with a physical disability (which impairs mobility, vision or hearing) will rise from 2.9 million to 3.6 million over the next 13 years, nearly double the pace of the population as a whole.
- People with physical disabilities represent 14% of consumer spending, or \$164 billion, making up a large and growing consumer group.
- By 2030, real spending by this group is anticipated to grow at three times the pace of the overall population, representing 21 per cent of the total consumer market or \$316 billion annually.
- Improvements to workplace access would allow over half a million Canadians with disabilities to work more hours, increasing GDP by \$16.8 billion by 2030.
- 57% of Canadians with physical disabilities who are currently unemployed believe they would be able to work if workplaces were made more accessible.
- Almost half (49%) of Canadians with physical disabilities who are currently working believe they would be able to work more hours if workplaces were made more accessible.

According to Ruth Wright, Director, Human Resources and Inclusive Talent Management Research, Conference Board of Canada, businesses should take notice of this growing market. “The population of people with physical disabilities is growing and has increasing economic clout, therefore businesses and governments need to pay attention to their accessibility needs. If access to employment is improved that injects even more consumer spending into our communities.”

With our aging population, one in five Canadian adults is expected to have a disability by 2036. This means the number of people who will benefit from greater accessibility is vast.

“Improved accessibility for people with disabilities is not just a question of human rights, but is an economic imperative”, said Rick Hansen, Founder and CEO of the Rick Hansen Foundation. “The status quo is clearly not sustainable. If government, private and social sectors work together, we can accelerate progress on behalf of all Canadians. This group represents tremendous spending power and an untapped workforce that can provide economic benefit to Canada.”



The report concludes that there is market demand currently going unmet because of accessibility barriers. With improved access, people with physical disabilities will spend a greater share of income in restaurants and grocery stores and on entertainment, recreation and sport, and physical activities.

About the Rick Hansen Foundation

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) was established in 1988, following the completion of Rick Hansen's Man In Motion World Tour. For nearly 30 years, RHF has worked to raise awareness, change attitudes, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Visit www.rickhansen.com to learn more.

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