

Lupus Canada Advocacy Campaign – Key Messages

Canadians living with lupus need better supports.

- Lupus is an episodic disability, meaning that a person living with lupus has fluctuating periods of symptoms (called flares) but this is not constant.
- Because of the constant state of symptoms and that people with lupus have such vastly differently symptoms due to their lupus, it is difficult to diagnosis and support.
- This is often a challenge for health care providers, and for policy makers.

Changes to federal supports are needed now to create better support for Canadians living with lupus.

- Existing government support programs are usually too prescriptive and do not consider the fluctuations and variety of Canadians living with lupus.
- Supports can be created, by making eligibility and program parameters more flexible for people with episodic disabilities, like lupus.
- A human rights approach to support programs, like Employment Insurance (EI), Sickness Benefit, or the Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D) Benefit, shifts the focus away from the disability and focuses on the individual.

The EI Sickness Benefit needs to be changed to help those living with lupus.

- The eligibility for the EI Sickness Benefit assumes that Canadians living with lupus, work regular 9-5 jobs.
- In reality, it may be difficult for those living with lupus to keep a job, because of their illness.
- Changing the eligibility of the EI Sickness Benefit from 600 to 400 hours, will help those who cannot work long periods because of their lupus, but want to continue too.

The CPP-D needs to be changed to help those living with lupus.

- The CPP-D definition of disability does not help those with an episodic disability, like lupus.
- The definition of disability should be changed from "severe and prolonged" to the definition within Canada's new Accessibility legislation.
- This new definition includes episodic disabilities, like lupus.

The federal election is the best time to advocate for these necessary changes.

- Federal candidates want to listen to you so that you will vote for them.
- This opportunity is great, because you can hold their feet to the fire, and urge them to support this important campaign.
- Getting a commitment to support Lupus Canada's campaign means that elected Members of Parliament will help us make this campaign a reality.