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3 July 2020

To: Navdeep Singh Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology
Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility
Paul-Claude Bérubé, Chair, CASDO
Anil Arora, Chief Statistician, Statistics Canada
Daniel Blaikie, NDP accessibility critic
Dan Albas, CP accessibility critic

The Canadian Association of the Deaf – Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC) is the national information, research, and community action organization of Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and hard of hearing (DDBHH) Canadians. Its mandate is to protect and promote the rights, needs, and concerns of DDBHH people in Canada. Founded in 1940, we are the oldest national-level disabled consumer organization in the country. We combine the purposes of a research and information centre, advisory council, representative body, self-help society, and community action group. CAD-ASC provides information kits, training advice, early intervention “best practices”, and families-at-risk programs to address crucial issues faced by DDBHH families.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am writing to express severe disappointment and outright anger at the **lack of accessibility** of Statistics Canada’s online survey of how people with disabilities are coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e., “Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians – Living with Long-Term Conditions and Disabilities”.

This survey is not available in ASL and LSQ Sign language versions. Statistics Canada says it is compliant with WCAG accessibility standards. That is irrelevant. What is relevant is that *it is not compliant with Canadian accessibility standards as were passed into law by the Accessible Canada Act.*

The standards supporting the Accessible Canada Act may not have been finalized yet. That is no excuse. The Government of Canada has a moral and legal obligation to install *obvious* accessibility measures immediately, one such very obvious measure being the provision of ASL and LSQ Signed videos. You have had one full year in which to take such an elementary step.

Even more infuriating is the response of Statistics Canada to our emailed question, “Why is this survey not available in ASL and LSQ versions?” (*See attached screenshot.*) The anonymous

respondent condescendingly suggested that Sign language-using Canadians who are eager to be included in this survey should get “another person to complete it on [their] behalf.”

This is completely unacceptable. What are we DDBHH people – children, that we should have to get “another person” to fill out the survey for us?

Whoever wrote that response is unfit to be involved in a survey of people with disabilities. The respondent clearly has no familiarity with the concept: “NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US!” Such a patronizing reaction is symptomatic of systemic discrimination.

DDBHH Canadians have every right to be included in a survey that targets people with disabilities. We have every right to the dignity and respect of being provided with the means by which to participate. Those means include Sign language.

Ever since the first “Health and Activities Limitations Survey” (as it was then called) was conducted in 1986, CAD-ASC has been fighting to awaken Statistics Canada to its anti-DDBHH, audist approaches towards collecting data on disability and deafness. Progress has been so slow, so nugatory, and so frustrating that in 2007, I filed a personal human rights complaint against them on behalf of CAD-ASC and all DDBHH Canadians. It was settled by mediation in 2009, but then Prime Minister Stephen Harper killed the Canada Census and as collateral damage the disability census too, and Statistics Canada could thenceforth gleefully ignore all the related obligations it had agreed to in the mediation.

It is incredibly disheartening and angering, even stomach-churning, to see that even the passage into law of the Accessible Canada Act has not stopped Statistics Canada from its blatant and ongoing discrimination against DDBHH Canadians.

This new online survey must be suspended immediately and not reinstated until ASL and LSQ videos are provided to accompany it. Otherwise it will **NOT** be anything close to an accurate and inclusive portrait of Canadians with disabilities, because it will screen out all of us who use the Sign languages that are protected and recognized as official languages of DDBHH people in Canada.

Sincerely,



James Roots
Executive Director
Canadian Association of the Deaf – Association des Sourds du Canada

cc: Board of Directors, CAD-ASC
16 affiliated Deaf organizations (national, regional, provincial, local)
28 organizations as the Pan-Canadian Accessibility Coalition

RE: StatCan collecting info on the impact of COVID-19 on people with long-term conditions and disabilities / StatCan recueille des infos sur les répercussions de la COVID-19 sur les personnes ayant un problème de santé de longue durée ou une incapacité

File Message Acrobat Tell me what you want to do...

Ignore Delete Reply Reply All Forward Meeting In June To Manager Done Reply & Delete Create New Move OneNote Actions Mark Unread Categorize Follow Up Translate Related Select Zoom

Delete Respond Quick Steps Move Tags Follow Up Editing Zoom

covid-19-disability-survey / enquête-incapacité (STATCAN) <statcan.covid-19-disability-survey-enquete-incapacite.statcan@canada.ca> Jim Roots Tue 9:44 PM

RE: StatCan collecting info on the impact of COVID-19 on people with long-term conditions and disabilities / StatCan recueille des infos sur les répercussions de la COVID-19 sur...

You forwarded this message on 2020-07-02 8:11 AM.

Thank you for contacting us about our current crowdsorce: Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians – Living with Long-Term Conditions and Disabilities. Our collection portal follows Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) ensuring that survey participants can access the content. Unfortunately, this survey is not available in ASL or LSQ. We understand that some people who are deaf or hard of hearing may not be able to complete this online survey on their own, but this crowdsorce collection does allow another person to complete it on someone else's behalf.

In terms of the dissemination of survey results, we have recently released results for the Canadian Survey on Disability in ASL and LSQ and will strive to do this again in the future.

For additional information or assistance, please call us at: 1-800-263-1136 (TTY: 1-800-363-7629). Thank you again.

From: Jim Roots [mailto:jroots@cad.ca]
Sent: June 29, 2020 8:11 AM
To: covid-19-disability-survey / enquête-incapacité (STATCAN) <statcan.covid-19-disability-survey-enquete-incapacite.statcan@canada.ca>
Subject: RE: StatCan collecting info on the impact of COVID-19 on people with long-term conditions and disabilities / StatCan recueille des infos sur les répercussions de la COVID-19 sur les personnes ayant un problème de santé de longue durée ou une incapacité

Why is this survey not available in ASL and LSQ versions?

Jim Roots
Executive Director
Canadian Association of the Deaf – Association des Sourds du Canada

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10:06 AM
2020-07-02