

Annual Report

2021 – 2022



SPINAL CORD INJURY CANADA
LÉSIONS MÉDULLAIRES CANADA

ABOUT SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI) CANADA

World War II veterans with spinal cord injuries established SCI Canada in 1945. Back then, our founders did amazing things such as:

- **Establish the world's first rehabilitation centre for people with spinal cord injuries - Lyndhurst Lodge**
- **Help create Veterans' Affairs Canada**
- **Expand services for people with spinal cord injuries to include medical, community and social support - one of the first disability organizations to demonstrate the Independent Living philosophy**
- **Build a supportive network of people and organizations across the country**
- **Import the first folding wheelchairs from the United States to ensure people with spinal cord injuries did not fade away in convalescent homes but instead could get out of hospital and flourish in their communities**
- **Help develop the first power wheelchair**

Over the years, SCI Canada established divisions across the country, which now include eight provincial organizations, referred to as Corporate Members. Together, we are a federated network supporting people with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities across Canada. We are proud to follow our founders' examples, and we continue to work for access and inclusion.



WHO WE ARE TODAY

Vision

All people with spinal cord injuries and their families thrive in an inclusive Canada.

Mission

We assist people living with spinal cord injuries, or a related physical disability, to achieve independence, self-reliance, and full community participation.

Purpose

We support collaboration among our provincial Corporate Members and undertake national projects that improve the lives of people living with spinal cord injuries, or a related physical disability, and their families.



A photograph showing a woman with long blonde hair and sunglasses sitting in a pink wheelchair. She is looking towards a display case in a museum. Behind her, a man in a yellow shirt is holding a young child. In the foreground, two other children are looking at the same display. The scene is indoors, with a dark wooden display case and a glass barrier in the background.

SCI CANADA FEDERATION SERVICES ACROSS CANADA

- **During the 2021–2022 fiscal year the SCI Canada Federation had:**
 - 30,150 members
 - 874 volunteers
 - 14,958 people using our services
 - 146 staff across 9 organizations
 - 9,000+ people in the Include-Me community development network
- **SCI Canada employed:**
 - Two half-time staff
 - One contract full-time employee funded by a national project led by another organization
 - Two special advisors promoting accessibility and justice for members
 - Five youth for eight-week summer contracts
- **The Board held four meetings during the year providing excellent governance leadership.**
- **The Executive Directors Council held 17 meetings to:**
 - Support collaboration among Corporate Members
 - Support implementation of the Accessible Canada Act
 - Coordinate our response to the pandemic
 - Guide operations at SCI Canada.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Two of SCI Canada's three Strategic Plan Priorities continued to be deferred until after the pandemic crisis. Work on Resource Development and Peer Support Services will resume in the fall of 2022.

Work on the third strategic priority, the Rapid Implementation of the Accessible Canada Act, continued in full force throughout the year. Our goal of supporting our community has never wavered.

- **We published a plain language version of the Accessible Canada Act in partnership with People First of Canada.**
- **The Include-Me network of over 9,000 people received 12 updates from us on various access and inclusion related activities. The most popular update was introducing other Canadian executive directors to the Include-Me movement, followed by information about the hiring of the Accessibility Commissioner and the Chief Accessibility Officer working on the Accessible Canada Act.**
- **We provided best advice to the Government of Canada. Change requires action and collaboration. We facilitate change by advising the Government of Canada on how to remove barriers and improve access and inclusion.**
 - SCI Canada is a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee at the Canadian Transportation Agency.
 - SCI Canada is a member of the Universal Accessibility Advisory Committee informing the Government of Canada on renovations for the lands and buildings making up Parliament Hill in Ottawa. During the year, we have been active in reviewing and improving plans for renovations to all buildings on including the Senate, the House of Commons and the Library. Our advice also included improvements to plans for universal accessibility features for the grounds surrounding Parliament Hill.
 - SCI Canada is a member of an inter-organizational group addressing Canada's responsibilities in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). David Shannon, Chief Justice Advisor, continues to be our representative for this important work

advancing access, inclusion and civil rights for people living with disabilities in Canada.

- **We provided resources on COVID-19. At SCI Canada, we have learned a lot over the past couple of years. Like everyone, we have had to adapt during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our response was agile, and we developed two web portals of accessible and relevant information and resources.**
 - The provision of COVID-19 information and resources continues to be a priority on the SCI Canada and the Include-Me websites
 - Include-Me provided 16 blogs related to COVID-19
 - SCI Canada's website provided valuable COVID-19 information via 12 blogs



Photo by: Chris Santoli



SPOTLIGHT: SCI CANADA ADVICE TO THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT THE CANADIAN TRANSPORTATION AGENCY (CTA)

SCI Canada is an active member of the Canadian Transportation Agency's Accessibility Advisory Committee. Joanne Smith is our Chief Accessibility Advisor. She provides advice on how to make transportation services in Canada accessible to passengers with disabilities.

This past year, Ms. Smith met with the Canadian Transportation Agency's new Chief Executive Officer, France Pégeot, to discuss primary recommendations to improve transportation for individuals with spinal cord injuries and other mobility disabilities.

Our recommendations are to:

- **Prioritize staff and employee education, training, and awareness about disability needs and rights**
- **Establish and implement consistent communication for passengers with disabilities**
- **Standardize all accessibility features, facilities, services, and assistance**

SCI Canada also consulted on two Canadian Transportation Agency subgroups and projects. These include the International Working Group to Improve the Special Service Requests Codes (SSR codes) and the Investigation of the Safe Securement and Containment of Mobility Aids in the Cargo Hold. Participation in the latter project involved testing a prototype designed to enhance the travel experience for people who travel with a powered mobility aid.

With the current state of international air travel, involving flight delays, cancellations, lost luggage, and a shortage of staff, people with disabilities are now facing additional barriers and challenges. SCI Canada's input to the work of the Canadian Transportation Agency is more important than ever.

SPOTLIGHT: CANADA'S MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING (MAID) LAW

SCI Canada continues to address concerns surrounding the Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) legislation. David Shannon, our Chief Justice Advisor, has helped prepare SCI Canada for presentations to the government.

On May 30, 2022, SCI Canada presented to the federal Special Joint Committee studying the current MAiD law. The goal of this presentation was to address the lack of safeguards to protect people with a new spinal cord injury from choosing to die before services are in place and each person has time to rebuild a satisfying and happy life.

SCI Canada recommended that the 90-day wait period for MAiD must be extended for people with a new spinal cord injury. A recent study of people with spinal cord injuries found that 50% of respondents had suicidal ideation in their first two-years post injury. Another study found that after the first-year post injury, more than 70% of people rated their life equal to, or better than, life pre-injury. It can take several months or years for a person to adjust to life after their injury. SCI Canada wants to ensure enough time is provided for a newly injured person to begin this adjustment process and receive enough information and support to see beyond the initial pain and despair to contemplate their future life.

The second concern raised by SCI Canada was the lack of choice people with disabilities often experience when they request MAiD. SCI Canada explained that when a person discusses MAiD with a doctor, they should also be offered other choices such as home services including personal support workers, basic living funds, suicide prevention, psychiatric services, and safe, accessible, and affordable housing. However, these services also need to be made accessible in terms of availability, cost and location, as many people with a disability experience loss of dignity due to lack of service access.

You can learn more about our work on MAiD, by viewing SCI Canada's presentation delivered on May 30, 2022.

You can also read the Senate brief from November, 2020.



SPOTLIGHT: DISABILITY AND POVERTY

SCI Canada is dedicated to reducing poverty for our members and for people with other disabilities in Canada. Currently, approximately 1.4 million people with disabilities live in poverty. The Government of Canada promised new legislation that will provide financial support for people with disabilities so that no one lives in poverty in Canada. The benefit will be called the Canada Disability Benefit. Read more about our work in this area.

SCI Canada presented recommendations about the Canada Disability Benefit to the Government of Canada. Based on collaboration with other national disability organizations, we are asking the federal government to do the following:

- **Ensure that the Canada Disability Benefit brings people with disabilities out of poverty in all regions of Canada.**
- **Adjust the Canada Disability Benefit yearly for increases in the cost of living as determined by Statistics Canada.**
- **Use the definition of disability in the Accessible Canada Act to determine program eligibility.**
- **Make agreements with the provinces and territories so that people who receive provincial disability support do not lose money if they receive the Canada Disability Benefit.**
- **Ensure that Household or family income or marital status do not affect the Benefit.**
- **Extend eligibility for the Canada Disability Benefit to people who are 65 or over.**
- **Ensure that individuals with a permanent disability must only provide proof of disability once.**
- **Allow people to apply for the Benefit at any time throughout the year if their financial circumstances change.**
- **Make the Benefit available to people in Canada living with disabilities whether they are working or not.**
- **Quickly return people to the Canada Disability Benefit if their employment status changes.**

SCI Canada is a partner with Disability Without Poverty, a group of organizations and individuals with disabilities. We also collaborate with the Pan-Canadian Disability Coalition's working group on the Canada Disability Benefit.



COMMUNITY BUILDING AND ENGAGEMENT

SCI Canada worked with other disability organizations and individuals through the Include-Me network. Our work focused on the rapid implementation of the Accessible Canada Act and other national access and inclusion issues. Here are some of the Include-Me statistical highlights from the 2021–22 year.

- **Updates sent to the community**
 - 12
- **Total Unique Opens of Updates: 21,219**
 - Our Average open rate: 38.38%
 - The average open rate across all industries is 21.5%
 - The average open rate for the non-profit industry is 26.6%.
- **Total update Opens: 61,140 (because the emails were shared or re-opened many, many times)**
- **Click-to-Open Rate: 19.13%**
 - The average click-to-open rate across all industries is 14.30%
 - The average click-to-open rate for the non-profit sector it is 10.3%



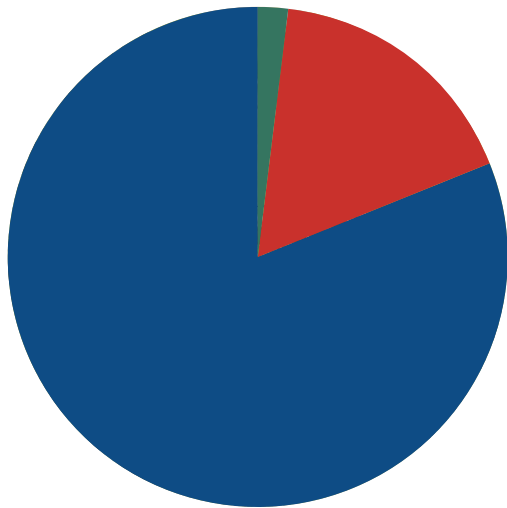
2021 – 2022 HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITY

- SCI Canada continued as a member of Minister Qualtrough's Disability Advisory Group. This provides an opportunity to present the needs of people with spinal cord injuries and other related disabilities to the Government of Canada. There are eleven individuals in this group.
- Our Include-Me social movement is increasingly used by the disability community and government to address issues that cross all disabilities. Three organizations paid to reach our network raising needed funds for the work of our federation..
- SCI Canada continued to collaborate with 34 other civil society organizations on the formation of a Pan-Canadian Disability Coalition. This coalition will address issues of interest across all disability sectors.
- SCI Canada advised on the development of core competencies for training personal service workers. This work will lead to nationwide standards and consistency of quality services.
- SCI Canada was featured in the Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine. Our article *Spinal Cord Injury Canada: A collaborative, federated network supporting people with spinal cord injuries and their families* is available to read. According to the journal, the article has been viewed 917 times.
- In March 2022, SCI Canada led a workshop with over 600 Public Service employees at the Government of Canada. This workshop was presented to the Community of Practice on Accessible Communications.
- In early spring, 2022, discussions started with representatives of the Juno Beach Centre in Normandy, France and Veterans' Affairs Canada regarding the 80th Anniversary of the Dieppe raid on August 19th, 1942. John Counsell, the Founder of SCI Canada, was injured in this battle. A tribute to John Counsell has been set up at the Juno Beach Centre for the next few years. His story was shared via Facebook by Veterans' Affairs Canada. The French story reached 9,347 people. It had 316 engagements and 11 shares. The English story reached 89,479 people. It had 2,556 engagements and 124 shares. Please take some time to read John Counsell's story.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

- SCI Canada ended the 21–22 year with a surplus of \$3,609.
- SCI Canada transferred \$144,127 to Corporate Members to support their work advancing social inclusion for people with spinal cord injuries and other related disabilities.
- SCI Canada sits on three Government of Canada advisory panels generating about \$5,000 annually for SCI Canada, 80% is passed on to Corporate Members.
- Leon's made a \$5000 contribution to support our work across Canada.
- The detailed Audited Financial Statements for the year ending March 31, 2022 can be viewed on our website.



Receipted Donations
Government Funding
Other/Fee for Service

REVENUE LINE

Receipted Donations
Government Funding
Other/Fee for Service
TOTAL

AMOUNT

\$ 11,034.00
\$ 393,959.00
\$ 83,383.00
\$ 488,376.00



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The 2022–2023 year is the end of our current three-year strategic plan.

In the fall of 2022, we will build a new three-year strategic plan to guide our priorities and activities until March 31st, 2026.

We wish to thank the Government of Canada for the funding that supports our work advancing social inclusion of people living with a spinal cord injury and other related disabilities in Canada.

We also want to thank Leons for their support of our services across Canada.

Finally, thank you to all our individual donors and volunteers for your support throughout the year. Your kindness and generosity is most appreciated.





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