



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday November 1, 2013

National Media Contact:

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MPP to Introduce Bill to End Genetic Discrimination in Canada

(Kitchener, ON) November 1, 2013 – On Monday November 4, 2013 Mike Colle, MPP for the riding of Eglinton-Lawrence, will re-introduce a Private Member's Bill, the Human Rights Code Amendment Act (Genetic Characteristics), 2013, that if passed would amend Ontario's Human Rights Code to include "genetic characteristics" as a prohibited grounds of discrimination.

"The Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness applauds Mike Colle, for his efforts to end genetic discrimination in Ontario", says Bev Heim-Myers, Chair of the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness and CEO & Executive Director, Huntington Society of Canada. "This will benefit all Ontarians. We look forward to working with the government to stop the practice of employers and insurance companies discriminating against Ontarians on the basis of genetic information."

Though other countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and many other EU countries, have taken important steps towards eliminating genetic discrimination, Canada has fallen behind.

The issue is a critical one. As research advances, more and more is being discovered about the genetic origins of disease and disability, including who might get what disease some day. "Our practices in business, commerce, health and research must ensure that personal complicated genetic information is used for the benefit of all Ontarians", says Bev Heim-Myers. "Who among us has perfect genes?" Heim-Myers points out. "Everyone could be at risk."

Media Availability

Date: Monday November 4, 2013

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Location: Queen's Park – Media Studio
Room 148, Main Legislative Building

Current Legislation: The Genetic Non-Discrimination Act (S-201) has been introduced federally. - An Act to prohibit and prevent genetic discrimination): This enactment prohibits any person from requiring an individual to undergo a genetic test or disclose the results of a genetic test as a condition of providing goods or services to, entering into or continuing a contract with, or offering specific conditions in a contract with, the individual. Exceptions are provided for medical practitioners and researchers, as well as for insurance providers in respect of high-value insurance contracts if provincial laws expressly permit a requirement that existing genetic test results be disclosed.

- More -

Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness/Coalition Canadienne pour L'Equité Génétique

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The Huntington Society of Canada is the founding organization of the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness (CCGF). CCGF is dedicated to preventing genetic discrimination for all Canadians. Canada is currently the only G8 country that does not protect its citizens against genetic discrimination.

"Huntington disease (HD) is a human rights issue. The idea of overcoming stigma and working together to obtain the human rights and human dignity that every person in the world is entitled to is one of the many things that the global HD Community has to fight for." explains Dr. Ed Wild, Cambridge University, Editor-in-Chief, HDBuzz.net

Members of CCGF/CCEG to date are:

ALS Society of Canada
Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
The Foundation Fighting Blindness
Kidney Foundation of Canada
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada
Ovarian Cancer Canada
Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada
Centre for Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics
Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Canada

Alzheimer Society of Canada
CORD
Huntington Society of Canada
Muscular Dystrophy Canada
Osteoporosis Canada
Parkinson Society of Canada

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Photo included

