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Genetic Fairness Coalition Commends Federal Throne Speech

Government showing leadership in pledge to ban genetic discrimination

(Kitchener, ON) October 17, 2013 – The [Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness](#) (CCGF) today commended the federal government on its Speech from the Throne 2013, delivered yesterday by the Governor General. The CCGF noted, in particular, the throne speech's commitment to preventing employers and insurance companies from discriminating against Canadians on the basis of genetic testing.

"We applaud the government for identifying genetic discrimination as a problem, and showing the leadership required to make this a priority," said Bev Heim-Myers, Chair of the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness and CEO & Executive Director, [Huntington Society of Canada](#). ***"This will benefit all Canadians. We look forward to working with the government to stop the practice of employers and insurance companies discriminating against Canadians on the basis of genetic information."***

Founded in 2008, the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness has been leading the charge for genetic fairness in Canada, calling for legislation to address this issue for several years at both the federal and provincial levels of government. Canada is one of the few developed countries to have not addressed genetic discrimination and privacy issues through legislation and or regulation. Many countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and many other EU countries, have taken important steps towards eliminating genetic discrimination.

Noting that all Canadians could potentially be at risk of discrimination for some, or other, genetic predisposition if the practice of gene-based vetting is allowed to proliferate, Heim-Myers noted that policymakers have a responsibility to adapt public policy to the times: ***"We are pleased that the Canadian Government has agreed to move forward on genetic non-discrimination. Our practices in commerce, science and health must keep pace with technology so Canadians are protected from incomplete information and inappropriate usage."***

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The Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness (CCGF/CCEG) is a coalition of organizations dedicated to preventing genetic discrimination for all Canadians. The Coalition is deeply concerned about discrimination against individuals based on their genetic make-up. We are united to educate Canadians about genetic discrimination and to influence governments both federal and provincial, and other relevant organizations to create change. CCGF/CCEG currently represents 18 hereditary genetic diseases in Canada.

Huntington disease is a debilitating brain disorder that is fatal and incurable. About one in every 7,000 Canadians has HD and approximately one in every 5,500 is at-risk of developing the disease. Many more are touched by HD whether as a caregiver, a family member, or a friend. Huntington disease is devastating for both the body and the mind. The symptoms, which may include uncontrollable jerking movements and relentless cognitive and emotional impairment, usually present between the ages of 30 and 45, and gradually worsen over the 10-25 year course of the disease. Eventually they lead to total incapacitation and death. The [Huntington Society of Canada](#) is the founding organization of the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness and is a respected leader in the worldwide effort to end Huntington disease.

For more information, please contact:
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