

Although more information is needed to fine-tune solutions, the collection process must not serve as an excuse for inaction. Existing information indicates clearly the severity and complexity of barriers that continue to disrupt the lives of Aboriginal people with disabilities. Rather than waiting for pressure to be applied, action plans can—and must—be developed to signal a new proactive approach. Because the National Strategy has received political support at the highest levels, turf wars among bureaucrats should not prevent this initiative from benefiting people with disabilities. Aboriginal people have the right to a comprehensive and integrated approach to removing the barriers associated with disability.

Such an approach to Aboriginal disability issues within the federal government would ultimately save money, given that the present process spends increasing amounts of money on ad hoc attempts to address varying regional needs. Interdepartmental co-ordination is also the best method of preventing disability. Government approaches to disability are too often health-oriented and curative in nature. Identifying and eliminating the social, economic, political and cultural causes of disability for Aboriginal people is just as critical as removing the obstacles that currently limit their full participation in mainstream community life. As the *Obstacles* Committee recognized in 1981, “the least costly disability is the one which does not occur” [*Follow-up Report*, p. 52].

**1** *The Committee recommends that:*

In light of the seriousness of the situation and the need for immediate and comprehensive action