

*Many of these people live in rural or remote areas. Of the 579 First Nations we serve, nearly 80% are not accessible by road. As a result, community-based services available to other Canadians are not as available to people in these communities.*

*Even where reserve residents are closer to urban centres with a broad range of community services, perceived real cultural barriers often inhibit First Nations people from using these services. In addition, off-reserve service agencies may be reluctant or unable to provide services on reserve.*

*Minutes , Issue 9, p.7, 13 February 1992*

Obviously, given the fragmented nature of the services that we described earlier in this report, the federal government needs more specific information about the nature and extent of disability amongst Aboriginal people in order to target its programs. DIAND, for example, explained that it does not automatically collect data on Aboriginal people with disabilities as a result of the way that its social assistance programs are established. Because DIAND programs are available to those who meet eligibility criteria, they are not set up to collect specific information on people with disabilities.

In 1990, the National Aboriginal Network on Disability (NAND) argued that to reflect the circumstances of Aboriginal people accurately, the collection of data on Aboriginal people with disabilities must be community-based and carried out in close consultation with, and wherever possible by, those people. Community participation is required because an unclear understanding of the definition of 'disability' and cultural differences between survey takers and survey participants has hampered the process of gathering information. Without this community