UPDATE on AIDE

May 2019

"The needs of Canadians living with and affected by autism are complex and diverse. The investment announced today will give Canadians easy access to reliable, quality information and resources from a trusted source. This free service will support greater awareness, understanding, knowledge and capacity to support the health and well-being of those living with ASD and their families."

Statement by The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health at the announcement of AIDE https://www.miriamfoundation.ca/en/news/96-health-minister-announces-funding-for-national-information-network-on-autism.html

AIDE- Autism-Intellectual Disability National Resource and Exchange Network is a new initiative that will create a credible and reliable source of information and support for individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and/or intellectual disabilities (ID) and their families in Canada. AIDE has been moving full speed ahead since receiving its funding in March 2019. We wish to share with you what we have been up to and explain where we are heading.

What is AIDE?

AIDE is a national resource and exchange network, with the aim of offering Canadians equitable access to credible, reliable and evidence-based resources tailored to those living with developmental disabilities (DD). Our national network will help to reduce regional disparities that some Canadians face in terms of access to information and services. AIDE will review and then share credible up-to-date information about DD and facilitate social support via a peer network. AIDE will offer curated information so that credible and relevant information can easily be accessed by Canadians including treatment approaches formal and informal supports, and a growing body of information about lifespan resources.

For a quick overview of AIDE, we encourage you to consult the attached poster that we presented at the Autism Leadership Summit that was held in Ottawa in April 2019.

Accomplishments to Date

Establishing the Backbone of AIDE

Work has been ongoing to build on an innovative platform that will be agile and multifaceted and is based on industry best practices. Avenue, Cisco, KPMG, Microsoft, SoftLanding and Telus are working together with the AIDE team to develop an integrated technology-based information blueprint ready for piloting over the summer. Our website landing page for signup is www.aideccanada.ca, and we encourage you to bookmark it because we will be updating it on a regular basis.

Identifying Knowledge Leaders

We held a kick-off planning meeting in early February in Vancouver with knowledge stakeholders from coast to coast to coast. Participants included advocates, parents, educators and researchers, all of whom offered guidance for the development of AIDE activities and content.

Amidst enthusiasm for the launch of AIDE, the consensus at the meeting was that AIDE should be transparent, not duplicate what already exists, and work collaboratively with interested parties. We were also reminded that our mandate is to inclusively serve both the ASD and ID communities.

Looking Ahead

Our priorities between now and the summer are:

- In order to better understand the views of people living with developmental disabilities and their families, we have engaged Pollara to conduct an online survey. We are in the process of finalizing the questions and expect the survey to be available across Canada within weeks.

- The recruitment of a permanent CEO to offer administrative leadership to AIDE

- The recruitment of Information Reviewers, Curators and Writers

- Setting up AIDE's first hubs in Montreal and Vancouver via the Miriam Foundation and the Pacific Autism Family Network respectively

- Continued community outreach: As we move forward, we are committed to collaborating with existing networks and organizations across the country and establish new partnerships, as needed, that will be of benefit to the ASD and ID communities.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact us at info@aidecanada.ca