

## Barriers to Health & Independent Living—Vision

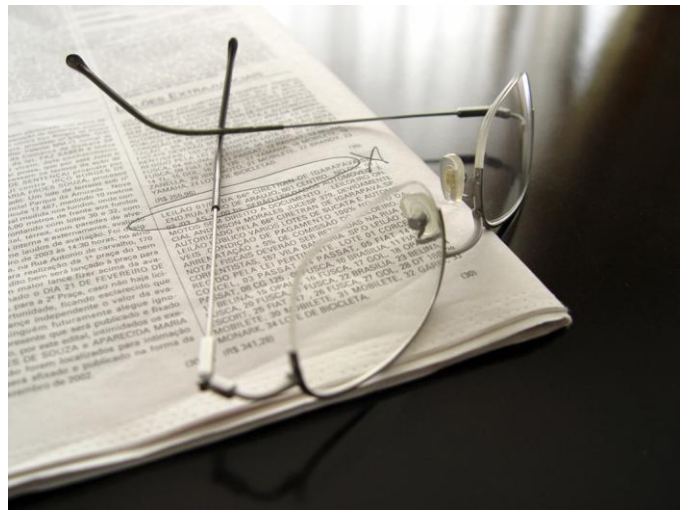
■ The following information relates to the barriers individuals face in their ability to live independently in Guelph and Wellington. It is hoped this data will provide insights to ensure these individuals' needs are being met, and that they can remain independent within the community.

### DATA SOURCES

#### Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) Data

The information in this report is based on the data from the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). The PALS is a tool which is completed after the census by individuals with disabilities whose everyday activities are limited because of a health-related condition or problem. The census contains two general questions on activity limitation. The respondents for the PALS were selected through the use of census information on age, geography, and the responses to the two general questions. Questions on the PALS ask for information on several aspects of an individual's life such as education, employment, leisure, transportation and accommodation. Data was collected between November 2006 and February 2007.

For more information on the PALS methodology and survey design, please see the following document entitled, *Participation and Activity Limitation*



*Survey 2006: Technical and Methodological Report*, located on the Statistics Canada website at: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-628-XIE/89-628-XIE2007001.htm>

### Community Service Providers

The service providers within the community that work on a daily basis to assist individuals who have barriers to independent living offered their expertise and information to these reports to ensure that the local community is heard.

For these profiles to remain relevant to the community, wherever available quantitative information from service providers has been added to give the census data a local lens. If quantitative information on the local situation is not available, anecdotal information has been added.

## FINDINGS

### Relevant PALS Data

Table 1 shows the number of individuals with seeing impairment in Canada and Ontario for 2001 and 2006.

*The PALS definition of a seeing impairment is "difficulty seeing ordinary newsprint or clearly seeing someone's face from 4 meters away (12 feet)."*

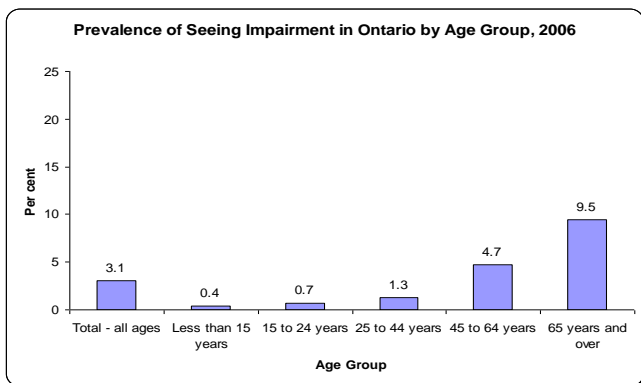
Table 1<sup>i</sup>

	2001				2006			
	Canada <sup>a,b</sup>		Ontario		Canada <sup>b,c</sup>		Ontario	
	TOTAL #	TOTAL % of pop	TOTAL #	TOTAL % of pop	TOTAL #	TOTAL % of pop	TOTAL #	TOTAL % of pop
Total - all ages	610,950	2.0	232,730	2.0	835,960	2.6	371,700	3.1
Total - aged less than 15 years	16,600		6,210		19,710		8,030	
Total - aged 15 years and over	594,350		226,520 <sup>E</sup>		816,250		363,670	

a. The Canada total excludes the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.  
 b. The sum of the values for each category may differ from the total due to rounding.  
 c. The Canada total includes the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Chart 1 illustrates the prevalence of seeing impairment for individuals living in Ontario by age group for 2006.

Chart 1<sup>ii</sup>



Data from PALS also provides the following insights<sup>iii</sup>:

- An adult living in Canada with a seeing impairment uses approximately 2.0 assistive devices.
- The most common assistive device used by individuals with seeing impairment for the Canadian population is magnifiers (91.3%). Please note that glasses and contact lenses are not included as an option, as they are commonly used vision aids and most people who wear them say their activities are not limited because of vision problems.
- The most common unmet need for adults with a seeing impairment in Canada was large print reading materials (29.7%).
- Approximately 12.4% of adults with a seeing impairment did not have their needs met regarding specialized equipment, or aids.

- Table 2 shows the frequency of experiencing difficulty participating in everyday activities for adults with seeing impairments, Canada, 2006.

Table 2

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than Monthly	Never
26.3%	9.1%	4.9% <sup>E</sup>	7.5%	48.6%

E - Use with caution

- Table 3 shows the limitation experienced by adults with vision impairments who have difficulties to participate in everyday activities, Canada, 2006.

Table 3

Some difficulty	A lot of difficulty	Completely unable to participate	Participation not affected
63.9%	20.8%	11.1%	3.8% <sup>E</sup>

E - Use with caution

## Information from Community Service Providers

Over the past year, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) has helped 466 individuals from Guelph and 38 individuals from Wellington County<sup>iv</sup>. CNIB offers support to individuals that have a wide range of barriers to vision.

It is very hard to estimate the number of individuals within Guelph and Wellington that could benefit from the assistance of CNIB as it is hard for some individuals to accept that they are losing their vision<sup>v</sup>. Individuals place a very high value on their vision. A survey done in 2006 revealed seven out of ten Canadians (70%) would not give their eyesight up for anything, not to win the lottery, not to be Prime Minister, not even for a lifetime of great sex<sup>vi</sup>.

Several individuals that have come to the CNIB suggest that they did not seek assistance earlier because there was a fear of losing their independence, such as driving privileges and the ability to work outside the home<sup>vii</sup>.

With this in mind if it is important for the community to understand the services available to individuals who may be experiencing vision loss as there are several programs that can ensure people can remain independent in their own homes if they choose.

## How has money raised from the United Way of Guelph and Wellington campaign been helping?

In the past year, the United Way of Guelph & Wellington has provided money to support programs run by CNIB. These programs offer support to individuals living in Guelph and Wellington that have vision limitations. Programs include Counselling and Referral Service, Orientation and Mobility Instruction, Rehabilitation Training and Library Services. All of these programs are focused on providing individuals with the tools and information to allow them to participate and be active community members.

<sup>i</sup> Participation and Activity Limitations Survey 2006: Tables - Series 6 - Type of disability for adults and children with disabilities by province, 2001 and 2006 - <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-628-XIE/2007003/series6-en.htm> (retrieved September 2008).

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> *Participation and Activity Limitations Survey 2006: A profile of Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities.* <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-628-XIE/89-628-XIE2008005.pdf> (retrieved September 2008).

<sup>iv</sup> Personal Conversation with Jennifer Johnston, CNIB. November 17, 2008.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vi</sup> *Primary Care for Your Eyes.* Canadian Association of Optometrists. [http://www.opto.ca/en/public/07\\_comm/07\\_00\\_32\\_nr.asp](http://www.opto.ca/en/public/07_comm/07_00_32_nr.asp) (retrieved November 2008).

<sup>vii</sup> Personal Conversation with Jennifer Johnston CNIB. November 17, 2008.