THE CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY
LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE L'OUÏE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Canadian Hearing Society calls for inclusion of Ontarians with hearing loss in OHRC's restaurant accessibility initiative

Toronto – In response to the release of the Ontario Human Rights Commission's report on restaurant accessibility, The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) calls for better representation of Ontarians with hearing loss.

"The estimated 25% of Canadians who experience hearing loss and the almost half a million who are culturally Deaf – using sign language as their first language – consistently face barriers in trying to access restaurants," said CHS Special Advisor to the President, Gary Malkowski. "This report is an excellent call-to-action but there needs to be a stronger consideration of people with hearing loss."

Common barriers encountered by people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing include:

- A lack of TTYs (teletypewriter) to order meals for delivery or make reservations
- Drive-through services do not provide an option for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing
- In designing restaurants little thought is given to the acoustics and the impact of music and background noise
- Visual fire alarms are only in a limited number of locations and rarely found in restrooms where patrons with hearing loss would miss the visual signs of an emergency

CHS is committed to working with restaurant owners and operators, landlords, government and the OHRC to identify barriers for people with hearing loss and to develop plans and policies to remove them.

Established in 1940, The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) is the largest agency of its kind in Canada, employing approximately 440 people who deliver 17 programs, from Employment Counselling and Interpreting Services to Hearing Aids and Communication Devices, through 28 regional and area offices. CHS is committed to providing services that enhance the independence of deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people, and that encourage the prevention of hearing loss.

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For more information on CHS and our programs, visit our website at www.chs.ca

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