



Canadian Psychiatric Association
Dedicated to quality care
Association des psychiatres du Canada
Dévouée aux soins de qualité

**A SUBMISSION TO THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**2015 PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATION
FROM THE CANADIAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION**

AUGUST 6, 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA) is the national voice for Canada's 4,500 psychiatrists and more than 600 psychiatric residents and is the leading authority on psychiatric matters in Canada. We provide evidence-based advice on the most effective programs, services and policies to achieve the best possible mental health care for Canadians and seek to work collaboratively with government and mental health stakeholders to find solutions.

The CPA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the deliberations of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance and focuses its recommendations primarily on the theme of, "Supporting families and helping vulnerable Canadians by focusing on health, education and training".

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Create a strategically-targeted, five-year, \$50-100 million Mental Health Innovation Fund to accelerate the spread of evidence-based innovations to improve the cost effective delivery of mental health services and programs at the community level.**
- 2. Invest in the development of a common and comprehensive set of national mental health indicators as well as mental health expenditure data to improve overall mental health system performance.**
- 3. Fund the development and implementation of a mental health research agenda for Canada, which encompasses population, health services, clinical and neuroscience research including research that incorporates knowledge from those with lived experience and diverse cultures.**
- 4. Implement the Mental Health Commission of Canada's *National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* throughout the public service.**

INTRODUCTION

Changing Direction, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada (Calgary 2012) calls on *all governments* to increase the proportion of health spending devoted to mental health from 7% to 9% over 10 years. In a separate document the Mental Health Commission of Canada presents the economic case for investing in mental health.¹ Recently the Government of Canada doubled coverage for psychological services for federal workers and retirees and announced it is considering a proposal to adopt national standards to promote a psychologically health federal workplace. These are important steps. However further investments are needed, ideally implemented under the leadership of a Deputy Minister of Health.

ACCELERATE THE ADOPTION OF INNOVATIVE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Across Canada, there are innovative pockets of excellence that address issues of access, continuity of care, and quality of care in the delivery of mental health programs and services², many of which are scalable. Adopting proven innovations on a country-wide basis is crucial to improving the overall mental health of Canadians and their health outcomes. The difficulty is a lack of resources and a coordinated mechanism through which to scale up these innovations.

In this context, the CPA was pleased to see that the federal Minister of Health has created an Innovation Panel to examine the state of health innovation in Canada. Psychiatrists look forward to sharing their expertise in the area of mental health.

While health care delivery is largely a provincial and territorial responsibility, the CPA believes the federal government is ideally placed to act as a catalyst to accelerate the nationwide adoption of proven mental health innovations.

The CPA recommends that, building on the foundation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the federal government **create a strategically-targeted, five-year, \$50-100 million Mental Health Innovation Fund (the Fund) to accelerate the spread of evidence-based innovations to improve the cost effective delivery of mental health services and programs at the community level.**

The details of the Fund's operation, including, funding, term and priority-setting, would be worked out in discussions between governments.

The Fund would fulfill two important components of the Mental Health Strategy of Canada, namely Strategic Direction 3.1.1 on access to services and Strategic Direction 6.1.3 on leadership and collaboration.

THE MEASUREMENT, PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

One cannot manage what one cannot measure. Comprehensive data is required to more effectively measure, manage and monitor Canada's mental health system.

Currently, there are no agreed upon mental health indicators that provide Canadians with a clear understanding of how the mental health system is performing. When it comes to tracking publicly-funded mental health expenditures, the data is almost exclusively related to hospital-based care. While

useful, this provides a truncated picture of mental health system performance. Yet we know a significant proportion of mental health programs and services are provided in the community.

CPA is pleased that the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI), have initiated work in the area of mental health indicators and expenditures data but more needs to be done to make this a priority.

CPA believes that the federal government, working in close partnership with the provinces and territories, can play a groundbreaking role. With additional resources, national agencies such as CIHI, PHAC, MHCC, Statistics Canada and the Institute for Health Information have a lead role to play in improving the measurement, performance and evaluation of our mental health systems.

The CPA recommends that the federal government invest to develop a common and comprehensive set of national mental health indicators as well as mental health expenditure data.

THE POWER OF RESEARCH

The power of research to improve the mental health of Canadians has recently been demonstrated by the At Home/Chez Soi project. CIHR, with the Graham Boeckh Foundation, is now poised to make a significant investment through the Transformation Research in Adolescent Mental Health initiative. Certainly these are areas in high need of research. There is much opportunity to be found by investing strategically in mental health research to help steer effective change in the mental health system. Although this is not the sole province of the government of Canada, the CPA urges the federal government to increase its core funding for mental health research and to invite both provincial governments and private partners to sign on to a common initiative. Such an initiative would be consistent with an important component of the Mental Health Strategy of Canada, namely Strategic Direction 6.2.2 on research.

The CPA recommends that the federal government fund the development and implementation of a mental health research agenda for Canada, which encompasses population, health services, clinical and neuroscience research including research that incorporates knowledge from those with lived experience and diverse cultures.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

Canadians spend more waking hours in the workplace than anywhere else. However, we know that mental illness accounts for more than \$60 billion in lost productivity costs due to absenteeism and presenteeism.

As one of the country's largest employers, the federal government can play a significant leadership role in advancing workplace health.

The *National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* (the Standard) is currently being piloted by a number of public and private organizations, including within the Public Health Agency of Canada, under the auspices of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. In our view, the Standard has an important role in improving overall workplace health while increasing productivity.

The CPA would like to see the Standard more widely adopted by public and private sector employers across the country. The federal government can serve as a positive example to other employers by adopting the Standard.

The CPA recommends that the federal government implement the Mental Health Commission of Canada's *National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* throughout the public service.

¹Mental Health Commission of Canada, Why Investing in Mental Health Will Contribute to Canada's Economic Prosperity and to the Sustainability of our Health Care System, <http://strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca/pdf/case-for-investment-en.pdf>

²Wait Time Alliance, Time to Close the Gap: Report Card on Wait Times in Canada, June 2014, <http://www.waittimealliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/FINAL-EN-WTA-Report-Card.pdf>, p. 7