

PRIME MINISTER LAUNCHES NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

NEW BODY TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CANADIANS SUFFERING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

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Ottawa, Ontario

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced the final selection of the Board of Directors for the newly created Mental Health Commission of Canada. Speaking at a gathering of international leaders in the mental health field, the Prime Minister said the selection of the new board members, as well as the chairs of the cross-country network of advisory committees, means the Commission is now formally set to launch its activities.

“The board and advisory committee members represent the best people in the mental health field in Canada today,” said the Prime Minister. “Their work will improve quality of life for Canadians and their families dealing with mental illness.”

In Budget 2007, Canada’s New Government committed \$55 million over five years towards a mental health commission. The creation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada was a key recommendation of a Standing Senate Committee report on mental health, mental illness and addiction in Canada. It is the cornerstone of the Government’s strategy to address mental health issues in Canada.

“I can tell you that there is already widespread enthusiasm for the creation of the Commission,” said co-author of the report and Commission Chair Michael Kirby. “I cannot count the number of offers of help and proposals for collaboration that have already flooded in.”

The announcement came during the 2007 International Initiative on Mental Health Leadership Exchange and Conference. This conference brings together leaders in the mental health sector from around the world for collaboration, networking and the sharing of best practices. More information on the Conference can be found at: www.iimhl.com <<http://www.iimhl.com>> .