

Government of Canada Confirms Funding For Canadian Mental Health Commission

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For immediate release

Montreal, Quebec - The Honourable Tony Clement, Minister of Health announced today that the Government's funding commitment to the Canadian Mental Health Commission is now confirmed at \$130 million over its 10-year mandate.

"This funding commitment underscores the Government of Canada's belief in this important initiative to improve the quality of life of Canadians and their families dealing with mental illness," said Minister Clement. "Some of the best experts in the mental health field in Canada are working with the Commission."

The creation of a mental health commission was a key recommendation of a Standing Senate Committee's report on mental health, mental illness and addiction in Canada. It was officially launched by the Prime Minister on August 31, 2007.

"I applaud the Government for its continued commitment to improve mental health in Canada," said the Honourable Michael Kirby, Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. "For far too long, mental health has not received the attention it deserves in this country."

"The Canadian Mental Health Association enthusiastically applauds the federal government's announcement of increased support of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. This is a tremendous vote of confidence in the Commission, and a most encouraging sign of the importance of mental health as a national issue," said Dr. Taylor Alexander, Chief Executive Officer for the Canadian Mental Health Association. "The CMHA looks forward to working closely with the Commission in achieving its challenging mandate, which will be much more feasible with this support," Dr. Taylor added.

In Budget 2007, the Government committed \$55 million over five years towards a mental health commission and today the Government confirms a total investment of \$130 million over 10 years as follows: \$5.5 million in 2007/08; \$7.5 million in 2008/09; \$12 million in 2009/10 and \$15 million per year starting in 2010/11 until 2017.

Through Budget 2008 the Government of Canada also committed an additional \$110 million to the Mental Health Commission of Canada for research projects to help Canadians with mental illness who are homeless. The Commission will set up five demonstration research projects across Canada. The sites that have been selected are: Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Moncton.

The establishment of the Commission is an important component of the Government's strategy to address mental health issues in Canada.

The three key initiatives of the Commission are to conduct a 10-year anti-stigma campaign, build a pan-Canadian Knowledge Exchange Centre, and elaborate a national mental health strategy for Canada.



Federal Health Minister Tony Clement delivered remarks at the Canadian Medical Association's 141st Annual Meeting, August 18, 2008.

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