



UPCOMING

“Canadian Academy of Health Sciences Forum on chronic disease management.”

Toronto, Sept. 23, 2008

MHCC Chair Michael Kirby will be a panelist at this event focused on several diseases including depression and dementia.

“Cross-cultural care—Ontario’s Aboriginal Experience”

Thunder Bay, Sept. 24, 2008

MHCC President and CEO Michael Howlett will give the keynote address to the Ontario Hospital Association

Low-Ber Memorial Lecture- “What took so long?” The blood, sweat and tears behind the launch of the MHCC

Montreal, Sept. 25, 2008

MHCC Chair Michael Kirby will be the keynote speaker

Ottawa confirms funding for MHCC

The federal government has confirmed its financial commitment to the MHCC. The Commission’s operating budget stands at a total of \$130 million, over its ten 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,” says federal Health Minister, The Honourable Tony Clement.



Minister Clement making announcements in August.

Commission executive are thrilled. “Mental health is an issue whose time has finally come,” says President and CEO Michael Howlett. “Now with this confirmed funding and term, we know the Com-

mission will have the resources and the time it needs to make a real difference.”

HOTCHKISS FORUM PRESENTATIONS

In June, experts from around the world gathered in Calgary to talk about stigma and mental illness. Check out the full presentation videos, and the document produced after a roundtable discussion: www.mentalhealthstigma.ca

Homeless Project coordinators chosen

Four coordinators have been officially chosen to head up the MHCC’s Homeless Research Demonstration projects in Canada.

As one of its key initiatives, the MHCC is focusing on mentally ill people who are homeless, in five centres across the country.

Each site will concentrate on a distinct group of homeless people. Themes will include: substance abuse and addic-

tion, urban aboriginals, ethno-cultural diversity, services in Quebec, and rapid population growth.

The project coordinators include: Catharine Hume—**Vancouver**; Marcia Thompson—**Winnipeg**; Claudette Bradshaw—**Moncton**; and Brenda Elias—**Toronto**.

An additional coordinator is expected to be hired for **Montreal** in the coming weeks.



In February, the federal government allocated \$110 million to the MHCC to find ways to help the growing number of homeless people who have a mental illness. For more on the projects, visit www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

Read the CMA's 13 resolutions to improve mental health care delivery in Canada

VISIT THE FOLLOWING LINK:
http://www.cma.ca/index.cfm/ci_id/86935/la_id/1.htm

CMA resolutions support the MHCC

The Canadian Medical Association recently adopted new resolutions geared towards improving mental health in Canada. At its annual meeting in Montreal in August, delegates agreed to 13 resolutions, including support for the MHCC's national strategy work.

There is a mandate for Canadian medical doctors and their organizations to "transform patient care"

for people with a mental illness.

The CMA will develop its own five-year plan to improve access to mental health prevention and treatment, and eliminate stigma and discrimination.

The CMA will work collaboratively with provinces and territories to introduce mental health programs in schools.

In addition, the CMA will help develop strategies to support family physicians in the treatment of psychiatric disorders in rural and remote areas.

In collaboration with the MHCC, the CMA also plans to recommend a range of medically necessary services to be reimbursed by health plans in order to support the treatment and recovery of the mentally ill.

"This foundation document will set the terms for a public debate on the future shape of the mental health system in Canada."

- Howard Chodos,
 Director, MHCC
 National Strategy

National Strategy development *accelerates*

The pace of the National Strategy development process is accelerating.

A "foundation" document is set to be reviewed by board members this fall.

This document will: outline the underlying goals and principles on which the national strategy will be

based; provide the basis for a targeted consultation process starting in the spring of 2009 that will be geared to determining how to achieve these goals; and accelerate the release of documents to the public in order to increase communication and sustain the Commission's momentum.



Once the draft document is approved by the board, it will be made available for public consultation before being finalized.

MHCC seeks consensus for anti-stigma campaign

The MHCC is planning discussions with Canadian mental health care organizations to help develop the Commission's vision, guiding principles and desired outcomes for its anti-stigma campaign. The Commission plans a fall meeting with

member organizations from CAMIMH (Canadian Alliance of Mental Illness and Mental Health). The MHCC is hoping members of the mental health family across Canada will create a resolution statement for the anti-stigma campaign that will

unite all groups with a common goal. It's expected the meeting will also result in the formation of a subgroup to serve as a liaison between the Commission and the mental health community as the campaign develops.



Busy summer for MHCC in eastern Canada

The MHCC participated in important summer meetings.

CMA Meeting

At the Canadian Medical Association’s August meeting in Montreal, MHCC Chair Michael Kirby gave a key address, focused on stigma and negative attitudes within the health care profession.

CMHA Conference

Also in August, MHCC mem-

bers attended a conference hosted by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), held in Halifax, NS. MHCC President and CEO Michael Howlett gave a keynote speech, with an update on the Commission’s work, and moving details of his family’s experience with mental illness. MHCC Board member Dr. David Goldbloom also gave a keynote address entitled “Stigma and

Mental Illness: Past, Present and Future.”

NL & NS Meetings

In July, MHCC President and CEO Michael Howlett met with senior government officials in NL and NS. He used the opportunity to outline the Commission’s projects. He learned more about mental health programs in each of those provinces, and explored possible

partnerships. While in St. John’s, Howlett learned about the “Stella Burry” projects. Stella Burry provides programs and housing for adults who want to return to work after dealing with addictions and mental illness (www.stellaburry.ca). Howlett also met with Commission members in those provinces to learn more about regional mental health issues.

Anti-stigma campaign planning gears up

A social marketing team has been chosen to help the MHCC develop a strategy for its national 10-year anti-stigma campaign. The team includes the “Centre for Excellence and Public Service Marketing”, and “HSB.” Both are Ottawa-based organizations.

The campaign will be the largest

systematic effort to reduce the stigma of mental illness in Canadian history. A carefully targeted, outcomes-oriented strategic plan will be formulated based on the best available research that can be evaluated over time to measure its effectiveness. There are two initial campaign targets, with others

to follow. 1) Youth aged 12 to 18, since research shows early intervention makes an enormous difference over a lifetime. 2) Health care workers, since anecdotally, the medical front lines are where people seeking help say they experience some of the most deeply felt stigma and discrimination.

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Advisory committees develop research

Eight MHCC advisory committees are now busy developing 24 research projects approved by the Commission this summer.



Eight advisory committees are now working on 24 projects

The Committees are tackling topics in the areas of Child and Youth; Family Caregivers; First Nations, Inuit and Métis; Mental Health and the Law; Science; Seniors; Service Systems and Workforce.

For more information on the projects under way, visit the MHCC website.

Media Attention Growing

Mental health is receiving growing media coverage in Canada. This summer, the Globe and Mail began a continuing series on mental health and illness. The MHCC and some of its experts figured prominently in a number of the stories. (see *MHCC website for link*). The MHCC is also appearing regularly in editorial pieces and other articles across Canada. This attention is likely to continue, as the Canadian government recently renewed its financial commitment to the Commission. (see p. 1)





**MENTAL HEALTH
COMMISSION OF CANADA**
10301 Southport Lane SW
Suite 800
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T2W 1S7

www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

The Mental Health Commission of Canada will:

- Be a catalyst for the reform of mental health policies and improvements in service delivery;
- Act as a facilitator, enabler and supporter of a national approach to mental health issues;
- Work to diminish the stigma and discrimination faced by Canadians living with mental illness;
- Disseminate evidence-based information on all aspects of mental health and mental illness to governments, stakeholders and the public.

Meet MHCC President and CEO Michael Howlett



**MHCC
President
and CEO
Michael
Howlett
plans to
bring
lasting
change.**

Through-
out his
career,
Michael
Howlett

has been drawn to social and health-related causes. He has served on the boards of The Children's Aid Foundation, The Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Meritus, Portage and the United Way.

Most recently, he was president and CEO of the Canadian Diabetes Association.

Michael's work with the Commission is a natural evolution. He plans to use his experience to help build a robust volunteer network and establish a not-for-profit charitable organization. Michael says these initiatives will help develop the human and financial resources needed to establish a strong presence across Canada for improvement to mental health services and supports.

"Mental illness is a disease like any other and it's time it benefited from the same level of public and governmental support," he

says. Having spent three decades in the corporate world, Michael feels connected to the issue of mental health in the workplace. Workers affected by an illness can be burdened by stigma and afraid to seek help. Michael believes that lifting the stigma associated with mental illness is key to ensuring individuals get the help they need.

Michael says the Commission will be a catalyst for that kind of reform, and will inspire a great social movement...similar to what happened with other diseases. "This social movement will ensure that mental health stays out of the shadows **forever**," he says.