



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARD FOR CANADIAN WORKPLACE

Standard supports Canadian employers and employees in improving work environments

Ottawa, Ontario (June 16 2011) – Canadian employers will have increased support for improving the psychological health and safety of their employees with the development of a new Canada-wide standard, the Mental Health Commission of Canada said today at a public event to introduce the Standard.

“The economic burden of mental disorders in Canada has been estimated at \$51-billion per year, with almost \$20-billion of that coming from workplace losses,” said MHCC President and CEO Louise Bradley.

“The requirements for an employee’s physical health and safety in the workplace are a longstanding concern for Canadian employers. Now it’s time to consider the mental wellbeing of the workforce the same way,” Bradley said.

Once completed, the voluntary *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* will provide organizations with the tools to achieve measurable improvement in psychological health and safety for Canadian employees.

MHCC is championing the development of the Standard, working collaboratively with the Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ) and the CSA Standards. A committee of health and safety professionals, labour representatives, executives, government representatives, experts in law and policy and other groups has been created by BNQ and CSA Standards to develop the Standard.

The funding for this project has been provided by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada and Bell.

“The Government of Canada applauds the efforts to improve the psychological health and safety of Canadian employees, recognizing that a healthy workforce is essential to Canada’s economic prosperity,” said Dr. Kellie Leitch, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of HRSDC and to the Minister of Labour.

There will be a 60-day public review process held in the fall. The completed Standard is scheduled to be released in 2012.

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“The public consultation period this fall will be an important opportunity to develop a Standard that works for Canadians and I would encourage all stakeholders to remain engaged in its creation,” Leitch said.

Mental health issues in the workplace: A growing concern

Mental health problems and illnesses are the leading cause of workplace disability in Canada, representing 15% of Canada's burden of disease. A Canadian Medical Association study in 2008 indicated that only 23 per cent of Canadians surveyed said they would feel comfortable talking to an employer about their mental illness.

The business case: What’s in it for employees and employers?

The advantages of a psychological standard for employees include protection from psychological harm in the workplace and the promotion of psychological wellbeing. For employers, the business case in favour of the new Standard rests on four main parameters – enhanced cost effectiveness, improved risk management, increased organizational recruitment and retention as well as corporate social responsibility.

The BNQ and CSA Standards will jointly manage the Standard development process and publication. The Standard will be developed as a ‘stand-alone’ National Standard of Canada (NSC).

About the Mental Health Commission of Canada

The Mental Health Commission of Canada is a catalyst for transformative change. Our mission is to work with stakeholders to change the attitudes of Canadians toward mental health problems and to improve services and support. Our goal is to promote mental health and help people who live with mental health problems lead meaningful and productive lives. The Mental Health Commission of Canada is funded by Health Canada.

About CSA Standards

CSA Standards is a leading standards-based solutions organization serving industry, government, consumers and other interested parties in North America and the global marketplace. Focusing on standards and codes development, application products, training, advisory and personnel certification services, the organization aims to enhance public safety, improve quality of life, preserve the environment and facilitate trade. CSA Standards is a division of CSA Group, which also consists of CSA International, which provides testing and certification services for electrical, mechanical, plumbing, gas and a variety of other products; and OnSpeX, a provider of consumer product evaluation, inspection and advisory services for retailers and manufacturers. For more information visit www.csa.ca.

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About the Bureau de normalisation du Québec

An administrative unit of the Centre de recherche industrielle du Québec (CRIQ), the Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ) has operated for 50 years in the fields of standardization, certification and the dissemination of information on standards. Officially recognized by the Québec government, the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), Canadian member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and the World Trade Organization (WTO), the BNQ is a forerunner in developing measures designed to support businesses, industrials and social and regulatory bodies. For more information: www.bnq.qc.ca.

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