



For immediate release

**Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health Applauds
Recommendations from the Senate Report on Mental Health, Mental Illness and
Addiction**

Ottawa, May 9, 2006 – The Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) congratulates The Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, its Chair Senator Michael Kirby, its Deputy Chair Senator Wilbert Keon and all its members for their groundbreaking work on *Out of the Shadows at Last – Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addictions Services in Canada*.

“This report is the result of years of hard – and passionate – work by the Committee, and reflects the input of hundreds of patients and their families, researchers, providers and others” said Dr. John Service, Chairman of CAMIMH. “We are gratified and encouraged that all of this input has come together in a series of strong recommendations for a path forward on a national strategy for mental health in Canada. The report’s emphasis on the establishment of a Canadian Mental Health Commission, its strong funding recommendations and its recognition of social determinants such as housing on mental health provide a very strong foundation on which to build.”

“I am confident that, with the establishment of the Canadian Mental Health Commission, we will start to see real and measurable change in the lives of the millions of Canadian families affected by mental illness” said Phil Upshall, National Executive Director of CAMIMH. “With the report now complete, we urge government to adopt the Committee’s recommendations and act quickly to establish the Canadian Mental Health Commission and get money flowing to where it’s needed.”

Role of the Canadian Mental Health Commission

CAMIMH strongly supports the establishment of the Canadian Mental Health Commission and its recommended role, funding and structure, and urges the federal government to act quickly to establish and launch the commission to carry out activities as outlined in the Report. “The arm’s length approach, the commission’s role as facilitator and catalyst, and the inclusion of stakeholders across the continuum of mental health care are all important recommendations” said Dr. Service.

Mental Health Transition Fund

In addition to strong endorsement for the Commission and its proposed funding envelope, CAMIMH is also pleased that the committee is recommending a targeted approach to transfers to the provinces that will enable a community-based approach to service delivery. “The Committee’s “Basket of Community Services” approach will be key to ensuring that services are delivered where, when and how they’re needed, and will place important control in the hands of those organizations working most closely with those



needing services, at the same time as it ensures that money will be spent only in the target areas”, according to Phil Upshall. “And the availability of funding to support peer workers is an incredible and welcome boon.”

Established in 1998, CAMIMH is an alliance of 18 national organizations whose activities span the broad continuum of mental health. They represent consumers and their families; health care and social service providers; professional associations; and community and research organizations. Together, they constitute a vibrant network of national, provincial and community-based organizations dedicated to serving the mental health needs of the people of Canada from coast to coast to coast. CAMIMH’s mission is to promote and facilitate the development, adoption, and implementation of a national action plan on mental illness and mental health.

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