



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Better mental health care for Canadians: We can't afford not to do it

Ottawa, ON (December 15, 2016) – As the country's ministers of health prepare to meet on Monday to discuss Canada's Health Care Accord, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) urges their attention to the very significant gaps in mental health care that exist across the country.

While one in five people face a mental health problem or disorder every year, only one in three report seeking and receiving the care they need. Stigma may get in the way of people asking for help, but there is another important barrier. Mental health care, particularly psychological treatment, is simply inaccessible to many Canadians.

"Psychological treatments are cost- and clinically-effective in the treatment of mental disorders; particularly those that most commonly affect Canadians, namely anxiety and depression. In addition, psychological treatments can result in 20 to 30 per cent of health care cost savings," says Dr. David Dozois, President, CPA.

The services of psychologists working in the private sector are not covered by our public health insurance plans. While 75 per cent of Canadians may have access to private extended health care insurance, often through employment, coverage for psychological services is almost always too low to afford a necessary dose of treatment. People either pay out of pocket or go without help altogether.

In 2013, the CPA commissioned a report from a group of health economists that developed and costed out models to make psychological care more accessible to Canadians. The CPA has been talking to government, employers, and other stakeholders about the report's recommendations. Says CPA's CEO, Dr. Karen Cohen: "This is a watershed moment for mental health care in Canada. We know what's needed, we know what works, and we know how to deliver it. With mental disorders costing the Canadian economy over 50 billion dollars annually, we can't afford not to provide care that works to Canadians who need it."

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About the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA)

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is the national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Canada. With over 7,000 members and affiliates, CPA is Canada's largest association for psychology. To learn more, visit www.cpa.ca.

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