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Canada's Psychologists Call for Better Access to Mental Health Services

Any New Health Accord Must Make Mental Health a Priority

Ottawa, ON (October 18, 2016) – The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) calls on all governments in Canada to make access to psychological services a priority in ongoing discussions between Ottawa and the provinces and territories on a renewed health accord.

“As meetings between health ministers at both levels of government progress this week, and for the rest of the year, all governments must come together to increase access to key services for Canadians who need them,” says Dr. David Dozois, President, CPA. “Minister Philpott’s mandate letter makes clear that Canada needs to improve its delivery of mental health services, and she has admirably made mental health a priority.”

The CPA has long been concerned that psychological services are not covered by the country’s provincial and territorial health insurance plans and are insufficiently covered by plans accessible through private insurance. The CPA has commissioned a report that examines and costs out the ways in which Canada can enhance access to cost- and clinically-effective psychological services. This report includes recommendations the CPA has made to government about how to deliver on its mandate when it comes to mental health.

One of these key recommendations is for Canada to adapt the United Kingdom’s *Improved Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)* program, which provides assessment and treatment of mental disorders, particularly those most commonly experienced, depression and anxiety. IAPT was fundamental to the implementation and success of the UK’s mental health strategy, *No health without mental health*. “IAPT has been very successful in the UK. Nearly half of people who have gone through the program have recovered and tens of thousands have gone off disability,” adds Dr. Dozois.

According to Dr. Karen Cohen, CEO, CPA: “While Canada has done a good job in recent years raising awareness about mental health and mental illness, we have not been as successful in making services and supports available to those who need them. It’s time to move from awareness to action – governments need to respond with concrete policies to ensure Canadians have access to the psychological services they currently lack. As health ministers meet, the CPA believes we have a historic opportunity to do just that.”

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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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