

CPA RELEASES ROADMAP TO GUIDE FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL-TERRITORIAL COLLABORATION IN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE HEALTH

February 6, 2023 (Ottawa) – Understanding the importance of the First Ministers’ meeting on health care on February 7, 2023, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) has released a set of recommendations that focus on how we can strengthen federal, provincial and territorial collaboration to provide Canadians with timely access to mental health and substance use health services.

With the federal government promising the establishment of a **Canada Mental Health Transfer**, initially valued at \$4.5 billion over five years, the CPA in collaboration with Santis Health — Canada’s leading health care consultancy — undertook a series of key informant interviews to discuss how the federal, provincial and territorial governments can work more effectively together.

From these interviews, 10 recommendations emerged that focus on mental health and substance use health services. The three core recommendations include: (1) the need for a more transparent and accountable relationship between the federal and provincial and territorial governments; (2) the importance of sharing (and learning) from on-the-ground innovations that drive meaningful change; and (3) ensuring that we have the capacity to measure, monitor and effectively manage our mental health and substance use health systems.

“For too long mental health and substance use health services have been on the margins of our health care system,” said Dr. Karen Cohen, CEO CPA. “These recommendations provide a thoughtful roadmap for partnership and collaboration that can improve how Canadians access care, in addition to overall health system performance.”

Moving forward, it is expected that the people of Canada will need more mental health and substance use health services, not less. The CPA looks forward to working collaboratively with both levels of government and their agencies to ensure the people of Canada get the timely care they need, when they need it. There is no health without mental health.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The federal government should accelerate the implementation of the Canada Mental Health Transfer (CMHT) and significantly increase its investment in mental health and substance use health services.

Recommendation 2: The federal government should introduce legislation to provide parity in access to mental health and substance use health services with physical health services, and to ensure that access to these services is inclusive and equity-focused. The federal government should also apply an equity lens to the renewal of the bilateral agreements.

Recommendation 3: As part of the next round of bilateral health agreements and the creation of the Canada Mental Health Transfer (CMHT), the federal government should require all jurisdictions to delineate federal and provincial-territorial contributions more clearly to funding initiatives on mental health and substance use health. This should be included in the funding agreements and all communications on the initiatives funded through the bilateral agreements and through the proposed CMHT.

Recommendation 4: The federal government should make publicly available the provincial and territorial reports to Health Canada on the use of federal funding. The federal government should also provide an annual public report on the progress achieved on mental health and substance use health services through the bilateral health agreements and the proposed CMHT.

Recommendation 5: The federal government should collaborate with the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA), the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), and stakeholders to create a pan-Canadian national learning network to share leading practices and lessons learned in improving access to mental health and substance use health services.

Recommendation 6: The federal government work with provinces and territories, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA), the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and key system stakeholders to set national goals to govern the renewal of bilateral mental health and substance use health agreements, and guide the implementation of the Canada Mental Health Transfer (CMHT).

Recommendation 7: In the context of renewing bilateral health agreements and implementing the Canada Mental Health Transfer (CMHT), the federal government should set aside a portion of the funding to support the scaling up of evidence-based programs and services administered through health grants with stronger accountability for results.

Recommendation 8: The federal government should provide additional resources to the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) to work with the provinces and territories to accelerate efforts to track and report on common indicators.

Recommendation 9: The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) should work with stakeholders to ensure data on mental health and substance use health is more visible and accessible. CIHI should also accelerate its work to include public and private spending on mental health and substance use health services as part of its National Health Expenditures data series.

Recommendation 10: Governments should work with the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) and stakeholders to expand the array of common indicators, moving beyond metrics of access to a more comprehensive data set that addresses social care, perceptions of mental health status, and the determinants of health.

About the Canadian Psychological Association

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is the national voice for the science, practice and education of psychology in the service of the health and welfare of Canadians. The CPA is Canada's largest association for psychology and represents psychologists in public and private practice, university educators and researchers, as well as students. Psychologists are the country's largest group of regulated and specialized mental health providers, making our profession a key resource for the mental health treatment Canadians need. For more information go to www.cpa.ca.

About Santis Health

Founded in 2012, Santis Health is a public affairs, strategic advisory, public policy, marketing and communications consultancy exclusively focused on providing first-class counsel and support for clients in the health and life sciences sectors. Serving clients across Canada with offices in Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver, we operate from an understanding of the context within which our clients work – including expert knowledge of the decision-making processes at play in government and across the health system, the actors and factors that weigh on those processes, and the best possible way to drive collaboration and impact. Learn more at www.santishealth.ca.

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