

CANADIAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION



SOCIÉTÉ  
CANADIENNE  
DE PSYCHOLOGIE

March 5, 2012

Standing Committee on Health (HESA)  
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6  
Canada  
Attn: Mariane Beaudin  
Clerk of the Committee

**Subject: Bill C-300, An Act respecting a Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention**

To the Members of the Standing Committee on Health:

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is the national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Canada. With over 6600 members (including more than 1800 student members), CPA is Canada's largest professional association for psychology.

The CPA supports the passing of Bill C-300, An Act respecting a Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention as a first step in developing a comprehensive suicide prevention strategy in Canada. CPA is urging all Members of Parliament to support this bill.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Canadian youth and reaches its highest rates in middle and even later life. The personal and societal costs of suicide are inestimable. Yet, Canada stands alone as one of the few developed nations without a national strategy for the prevention of suicide.

**The CPA believes that a national coordinating body to oversee and drive the implementation of a strategy is essential to its success.** A national coordinating body could report back to Parliament annually to demonstrate its progress to date. The CPA believes that a call to action that charts a course for suicide prevention in Canada must also address the many factors that put people at risk, promote the factors that protect

**Canadian Psychological Association / Société canadienne de psychologie**  
141 ave Laurier Ave. West, Suite 702, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5J3  
Tel.: 613-237-2144 Fax: 613-237-1674

them, and delivers needed services and supports. **As such, we recommend that the bill be strengthened to include the following amendments:**

(1) The creation of a distinct national coordinating body for suicide prevention that

a) reports its progress back to parliament on an annual basis; and

b) adopts the Blueprint for Canadian National Suicide Prevention Strategy that was prepared by the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention with other organizations and individuals.

(2) The assessment of access to appropriate and adequate health, wellness and recovery services, including mental health and substance abuse services, for all Canadians, as well as for families and communities.

The CPA is also urging all federal politicians to show continued leadership and coordinate a response to what is a complex and devastating national public health problem. Last fall, the House of Commons voted overwhelmingly in favor of the motion recognizing suicide prevention as a national public health priority that called upon the federal government to establish and fund a national suicide prevention strategy. **The CPA is hopeful that the 2012 Federal budget will include the appropriate and necessary funds to accomplish this goal.**

It is also important that the Government continue to fund research that will advance evidence based knowledge about suicide and suicide prevention, and evaluation to determine effective practices for the prevention of suicide.

Yours truly,



Karen Cohen,

K.R. Cohen Ph.D., C. Psych.  
Chief Executive Officer  
Chef de la direction  
Canadian Psychological Association  
Société canadienne de psychologie  
141 Laurier Avenue West, suite 702  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5J3

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**Tel.: 613-237-2144 Fax: 613-237-1674**

[executiveoffice@cpa.ca](mailto:executiveoffice@cpa.ca)  
613-237-2144, ext. 300

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