

CANADIAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DE PSYCHOLOGIE

April 4, 2012

Thomas Mulcair
Leader of the Official Opposition
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Mulcair,

On behalf of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), I would like to extend sincere congratulations on being elected Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada and the Leader of the Official Opposition.

The Canadian Psychological Association 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 researchers and practitioners.

We have been encouraged by your party's efforts to advance mental health policy, including support for the Mental Health Commission of Canada, its pan-Canadian mental health strategy and stigma awareness initiative. We were also encouraged by New Democrats recent election promise to commit funding to implement a national Mental Health Strategy that would include suicide prevention. But we want to take this opportunity to remind you that more is needed to help the one in five Canadians who will suffer from a mental illness in a given year.

Mental disorders are a leading cause of disability in Canada and represent a significant burden on the economy. It estimated mental illness costs the Canadian economy \$51 billion annually, with a third of that attributed to lost productivity.

Approximately 40% of long term disability claims made to large employers are related to mental health problems. The fastest growing category of disability costs for Canadian employers is depression.

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There are effective treatments for common mental disorders – depression and anxiety – and psychological treatments are chief among them. Unfortunately, however, Canadians face barriers of supply and accessibility when it comes to needed psychological treatments.

CPA is willing to provide any assistance you may require to help improve mental health services in Canada. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about the association and its activities. You may also visit our web site at www.cpa.ca

We wish you all the best in your role as Leader of the NDP.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Cohen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name and title.

Karen R. Cohen Ph.D., C. Psych.
Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Psychological Association

