

Press Release - For Immediate Release

Psychologists Applaud Federal Government's Benefit Increase

Psychological Services Coverage to Double from \$1,000 to \$2,000 for Federal Workers and Retirees

(Ottawa, Ontario) April 1, 2014. The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) applauds the federal government and Treasury Board President, the Honourable Tony Clement, for taking a huge step in the right direction by increasing coverage for psychological services for federal workers and retirees. As of October of this year, coverage for psychological services will double from \$1,000 per year to \$2,000 as part of the recent benefit reform package negotiated with the public sector union.

“The CPA congratulates the federal government for taking this highly significant step towards greater access to psychological services for Canada’s federal public servants and their families,” said Dr. Wolfgang Linden, President of the CPA. “The mental health of Canada’s hundreds of thousands of federal employees is of vital importance to our economy. By doubling the benefit for psychological services, the government shows its support of the mental health of its workforce”, adds Dr. Linden,

Mental disorders and conditions come at great cost to individuals, families, the workplace and the economy. In 2013, CPA commissioned a report on how Canada can enhance access to psychological services for Canadians. The report noted that of the \$20 billion that mental illness costs the workplace, \$6 to \$7 billion could be recovered if employees were given timely access to effective psychological services. “As the country’s biggest employer, the federal government is providing important leadership by showing all employers that access to psychological services can be increased in the context of overall cost savings” said Dr. Karen Cohen, CEO of CPA.

The coverage increase for psychological services was part of a larger federal public servant benefit reform package that will save the taxpayer more than \$7 billion over the next decade. With 40% of long term disability claims related to mental health, the provision of timely and effective psychological care stands to have significant cost offset in the long term.

“The Canadian Psychological Association has been calling for increased access to psychological services for federal public servants for some time,” continued Dr. Cohen. “We have psychological treatments that work, and experts trained to deliver them. Yet the services of psychologists are too often inaccessible to those who need them because public and private health insurance systems do not sufficiently cover costs. Doubling the coverage amount to \$2,000 per year per federal worker is an important step in the right direction. The government is to be applauded for this very important policy decision.”

The Canadian Psychological Association is the national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Canada. With almost 7000 members and affiliates, CPA is Canada's largest professional association of psychologists.

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