



December 18, 2013

I am writing you on behalf of Canada's 18,000 registered psychologists to bring your attention to an extremely important issue facing Canada's workforce. Psychologists – Canada's largest group of licensed mental healthcare providers – are reaching out to large employers across the country to bring workplace mental health where it belongs: at the heart of Canada's conversation on workplace productivity.

As the CEO of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) **I would like to request a meeting with the leadership of your organization** to discuss ways in which you can address the mental health needs of your employees to improve workplace morale and productivity. For too long the importance of mental health in the workplace has been ignored and insufficiently addressed in insurance plans. There are ways in which we can help address this gap to enhance the productivity and the well-being of the employees that work for your organization.

The federal government – Canada's single biggest employer – has recognized the increasing proportion of disability claims that are related to mental health and the need to better manage health and disability in the workplace. As a large private sector employer, the opportunity exists for you to have a profoundly positive impact on the mental health needs of your own employees, their productivity, and your own bottom line.

One in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem every year. Yet only about one-third of those with a mental health problem receive help; because of stigma and because psychological services are not covered by our provincial and territorial public health insurance plans. When psychological services are covered by private plans, the coverage is often too little to afford a meaningful amount of treatment.

Mental health problems currently cost the Canadian economy 50 billion dollars annually. That is close to three per cent of the entire Canadian economy in lost productivity every year. Mental disorders account for more of the global burden of disease than all cancers combined. Although there is great concern about containing health care costs, when it comes to mental health, spending less on care costs more to the economy in the long term.

As a large employer there are ways in which you can help combat this large and growing problem. CPA has concrete recommendations for governments and private insurers that would make a profound difference on your employees' mental health.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to discuss this further. A member of my team will be in touch soon to follow up on this request. Thank you kindly for your time. I look forward to meeting with you in the near future.

Karen Cohen
CEO
Canadian Psychological Association