



Canadian Psychological Association applauds the Federal Government for revisiting its disability management initiative: Better approach to Mental Health needed

For Immediate Release

(Ottawa, Ontario) March 21, 2013. The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is pleased that the Federal government will be examining its disability management practices to get sick and injured workers back to work faster. CPA hopes that appropriate and necessary steps are taken to address mental health issues which now account for almost half of all disability claims made by employees of the Federal government.

Last year on any given day, 19,000 public servants are on sick leave and Federal employees were absent an average of 12.5 days. In 2011, the disability plan, administered by Sun Life took in 3,875 new claims, more than 47% of which were for mental health conditions — led by depression and anxiety.

“The incidence and prevalence of mental health issues among Canadians are acute and have significant impact on the workplace. The federal government, as a large employer itself, can do much to innovate and lead by example when it comes to psychological health in the workplace,” said Dr. Karen Cohen, Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Psychological Association.

“Research has demonstrated that psychological treatments are among the most effective treatments for the most common of mental disorders such as depression and anxiety. They are considered the treatment of choice for anxiety disorders and significantly reduce the risk of relapse for depression. The Canadian Psychological Association put forward a number of recommendations to the Standing Committee on Finance for the pre-budget consultation about this issue and hopes that they take them into consideration,” added Dr. Cohen.

- Revisit the extended health care insurance plans for federal public employees. The caps on individual services offered within the insurance basket do not correspond to current need. Consider setting a cap on the designated basket of services and permitting employees’ health care needs to drive access to service. CPA would be very glad to work with government to envision a more clinically and cost effective mechanism to respond to the mental health needs of its employees.
- Remove the current requirement that an employee of the federal public service must get a referral from a medical doctor before qualifying for reimbursement for psychological services. Other insurance plans do not have this gatekeeper requirement – one that creates bottlenecks and unnecessary delays in getting treatment to people in need.



- Institute mandatory management training whereby dealing with mental health issues in staff is part of the curriculum.

The Federal Government should also consider adopting the new standard for psychological health and safety in the workplace.

About

The Canadian Psychological Association is the national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Canada. With over 6600 members and affiliates, CPA is Canada's largest professional association for psychology.

For further information:

Tyler Stacey-Holmes
Canadian Psychological Association
(tel) 613-237-2144
publicrelations@cpa.ca
www.cpa.ca