



Canadian Psychiatric Association  
*Dedicated to quality care*  
Association des psychiatres du Canada  
*Dévouée aux soins de qualité*

141 Laurier Avenue West Suite 701  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5J3  
Tel: (613) 234-2815  
Fax: (613) 234-9857

141, avenue Laurier Ouest  
Bureau 701  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 5J3  
tél : (613) 234-2815  
télééc : (613) 234-9857

[www.cpa-apc.org](http://www.cpa-apc.org)  
[cpa@cpa-apc.org](mailto:cpa@cpa-apc.org)

October 19, 2011

The Hon. Madeleine Dubé  
Minister of Health  
New Brunswick Legislative Assembly  
P.O. Box 6000  
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Dear Minister,

It is our understanding that the Health Accord will be a topic of discussion at the First Ministers meeting in Halifax next month. The Canadian Psychiatric Association is requesting that you place mental health and addictions at the forefront of the agenda during these negotiations.

Mental illness and poor mental health have a profound impact on Canadian society. It is estimated at least one in five Canadians will suffer from a mental illness at some point in their lives. Mental illness affects individual Canadians of all ages and in all segments of the population, and is prevalent in all regions, including rural and urban areas.

Stigma and discrimination is the primary barrier to treatment and recovery. It has been demonstrated to result in delayed seeking of treatment, early treatment discontinuation, problems in finding housing and employment, and inadequate mental health care – all of which lead to adverse health and economic effects.

At a systems level, stigma and discrimination means that mental illnesses get less than their fair share of the health budget. The discrepancies between disease burden and funding are significant. The World Health Organization's 2005 report attributed 31.7 per cent of all years lived with disability to neuropsychiatric conditions. Nevertheless, the percentage of health funds spent on clinical care and research for these conditions falls abysmally short of this mark. These conditions are estimated to cost the Canadian economy \$51 billion annually. While mental illnesses constitute more than 15 per cent of the disease burden in Canada, a disproportionately small fraction of total health funding is allocated to mental health care — six per cent in Canada in fiscal year 2003/04, which is below the level in most European and other developed countries.

People can recover from mental illness, but until these issues are addressed efforts to provide better mental health care will continue to be hampered. As you develop your plans for the next Health Accord we are asking that:

- Mental health receive dedicated funding in the 2014 Health Accord and that funds spent on mental health, mental illness and addictions are proportionate to the burden of illness in Canada.
- We also urge you to bring psychiatric conditions and other mental health services to the forefront of your wait times strategy. This is especially urgent for children and youth because we know that early, timely access to mental health care can make the difference between rapid recovery and a quick return to daily living and lifelong chronic illness.
- We also encourage additional investments in collaborative care models which have improved access to mental health care and increased the capacity of primary care to manage mental health and addiction problems.

**We hope that you will consider our request to have mental health and addictions put on the agenda at the next First Ministers meeting.**

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Fiona McGregor



President, Canadian Psychiatric Association

Dr. Manon Charbonneau



Past President, Canadian Psychiatric Association  
Chair, Stigma Working Group

cc: Dr. Kulli Poder, President, New Brunswick Psychiatric Association