
MENTAL HEALTH NOTES

NEWS & EVENTS FROM THE CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, ONTARIO DIVISION

March 8, 2002

St. Michael's Hospital lets go all clinical psychologists

The mental health community has reacted with alarm to the news that St. Michael's Hospital intends to terminate all eight clinical psychologists and two psychology interns on its staff.

According to Dr. Ester Cole of the Ontario Psychological Association, this move will have an immediate impact on the community; "Last year the psychologists at St. Michael's treated a total of 550 patients. The community served by St. Michael's has a number of particularly vulnerable populations. Since psychological services provided outside of hospitals are not covered by OHIP, most of these people will have nowhere to go for necessary and ongoing psychology services."

"The impact of poor mental health on an individual's physical well-being has been documented extensively," adds Dr. Barbara Everett, Chief Executive Officer of Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division. "To neglect the mental health consequences of serious physical illness is remarkably short-sighted and more costly in the long run."

The NDP has responded to the terminations by calling on the Conservative government to step in to save the psychological services at St. Michael's. NDP Health Critic Shelley Martel went on to say that, "forcing the closure of these hospital services represents privatization by stealth. For every hospital service lost, for-profit, private clinics will be there to cater to those who can afford them. Patients without the money will go without needed services."

The terminations take effect on March 22, 2002.