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Mr. Jeffrey Lozon
Chief Executive Officer
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This message is an expression of my sadness in hearing of the recent administrative decision to shut down the Psychology Department at St. Michael's. For the past 24 years, I have worked with those persons having undergone changes in their thinking, memory and personality as a result of an acquired neurological condition such as traumatic brain injury and multiple sclerosis. My work has been mainly with outpatients. From my many years of experience I have seen the harmful effects to patients and families from assessment, therapeutic and counselling services being provided by service providers not well versed in the relationships between brain functioning and thinking, memory and personality.

Often, the cognitive and personality changes associated with neurological conditions can be easily misinterpreted as difficulties in motivation or attributable to family dynamics. Well intentioned but inadequately trained service providers can most definitely do harm that can be long lasting. My fellow psychology colleagues and I have seen the harmful effects of inappropriate services to these neurological patients.

With such a client group that is most vulnerable, a psychologist trained in the relationships between brain functioning and behaviour is the kind of professional that can well serve this group. Both the assessment and therapeutic interventions provided by psychologists are well researched, evidence-based type services. The psychologist is able to place symptomatic complaints in their proper neurological context and provide the most appropriate services.

It also very important to note that many of these patients are without third party funding so appropriate psychological interventions are beyond the financial reach of many.

While recognizing the financial realities that all hospitals are facing across this country, the decision to eliminate psychological services does create a two-tiered system. Those that have the financial means either through their own resources or through work plan benefits or third party payers will receive services denied to those less fortunate.

Respectfully,

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