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To: Dr. John Service, Executive Director, Canadian Psychological Association;
The Honorable Tony Clement, Minister of Health and Long-term Care;
Mr. Jeffrey Lozon, CEO, St. Michael's Hospital

Dear Sirs:

It is with great dismay that I read of the elimination of psychological services at St. Michael's. Patients who received, or who are in need of, psychological services will most certainly be significantly affected by the removal of this department, which should be an integral part of all hospitals. It is a great pity that the decision to eliminate these vital patient services is being permitted, and it is also a good indication of the (hospital and government) decision-makers' ill-placed priorities with regard to health care services. Perhaps this decision was compounded by a poor understanding and/or awareness of the contributions of clinical psychological services to patient health, recovery, assessment and treatment needs, and so on. I'm certain that the Canadian Psychological Association or the Ontario Psychological Association would be happy to educate hospital and government decision-makers with regard to the proven effectiveness of psychological services; their impact on reduced suffering, reduced use of emergency rooms, hospitalization, pharmaceuticals and physician services; and that CPA or OPA would also be glad to remind decision-makers of the importance of access to psychological services for all individuals, even those who cannot afford to pay for them out-of-pocket. I note that clinical psychological services are not covered elsewhere (e.g., OHIP), and for most patients, cutting hospital psychological services seems tantamount to ensuring that patients will not receive these much-needed services if not within the hospital setting they find themselves. If St. Michael's Hospital is, as stated in a recent news article, truly sensitive to the impact on patients and wish to minimize disruptions to their care, how do they plan to deal with future patients' needs for these services? Psychological services are not disposable, patient care will be affected when psychological services are removed, and the only option this seems to leave St. Michael's, and other hospitals who may be considering elimination of these services, is that they no longer admit or treat any patients who are (also) in need of psychological services if in fact these are not provided by the hospital.

Seems silly, doesn't it, but surely no more so than is the elimination of clinical psychological services from St. Michael's and other hospitals.

Dr. Rosemary I. Moulden