



June 3, 2013

Mr. Justin Trudeau
Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada
81 Metcalfe Street, Suite 600
Ottawa, ON, K1P 6M8

Dear Mr. Trudeau,

On behalf of the Canadian Psychological Association, please accept our sincere congratulations on being elected as the new Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is the national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Canada. With almost 7,000 members and affiliates, CPA is Canada's largest association for psychology.

We have been very encouraged by your party's efforts to advance mental health policy by supporting the work of the Mental Health Commission of Canada and Canada's mental health strategy. We have also been pleased to support your party's commitment to suicide prevention over the last few years.

There is more needed to help the one in five Canadians who will experience a mental health problem in a given year. Mental disorders are a leading cause of disability in Canada and represent a significant burden on the economy. It is estimated that mental illness costs the Canadian economy \$51 billion annually, with a third of that attributed to lost productivity. Approximately 40% of long term disability claims made to large employers are related to mental health problems. The fastest growing category of disability costs for Canadian employers is depression.

There are effective treatments for common mental disorders – depression and anxiety – and psychological treatments are chief among them. Unfortunately, however, Canadians face barriers of supply and accessibility when it comes to necessary treatments.

Canada has fallen behind. Other countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, the Netherlands, and Finland have launched mental health initiatives which include covering the services of psychologists through public health systems, particularly in primary care.

CPA believes that the federal government has a crucial role to play in Canada's mental health. This role includes delivery of care in jurisdictions of its authority, ensuring that health transfers meet the needs of Canadians, and collaborating with provinces and territories. As a large employer with a workforce of nearly one half million people, the Federal Government can also lead by example in promoting psychologically healthy workplaces and in providing meaningful extended mental health coverage for employees who need it.

And finally, investment in psychological research is also paramount to Canada's social fabric. Psychologists study how we think, feel and behave and apply that knowledge to understand, explain and change human behavior. In 2012, the Council of Canadian Academies, in its report *The State of Science and Technology in Canada*, listed psychology and cognitive science as one of the six research fields in which Canada excels. Continued and increased funding for psychological research is critical to improving the health and well-being of Canadians as well as the organizations and communities in which they live and work.

CPA is willing to provide any assistance you may require to improve upon the mental health services and supports for Canadians. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about the association and its activities. You may also visit our web site at www.cpa.ca.

We wish you all the best in your new and exciting role as Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Cohen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Karen Cohen Ph.D., C. Psych.
Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Psychological Association