

The Canadian Psychological Association applauds commitment to increase access to psychologists

OTTAWA, Nov, 20, 2014 – The Canadian Psychological Association welcomes the Manitoba Liberal Party’s commitment to directly fund psychologists under the public health care system and to hire and retain more psychologists in the province of Manitoba.

The needs to increase access to mental health services in Canada are considerable. One in 5 Canadians will experience a mental health problem in a given year; the most common of which are depression and anxiety. The fastest growing category of disability costs is depression.

Psychologists are Canada’s largest group of regulated, specialized mental health care providers. However their services are not funded by provincial and territorial health insurance plans. In the private sector, Canadians either pay out of pocket for psychological service or rely on the private health insurance plans provided by their employers. The coverage provided through private plans is almost always too low for a clinically meaningful amount of psychological service. Many of those in need, simply go without as they have no insurance and have insufficient means.

“Research has demonstrated that psychological treatments are among the most effective treatments for the most common of mental disorders such as depression and anxiety. Psychological disorders that are addressed promptly and effectively have considerable offsets – in the lives of individuals and families but also in fewer medical visits and decreased need for short or long term disability,” said CPA President, Dr. Kerry Mothersill.

“If we want a health care system that will deliver cost and clinically effective care then we must re-vision policies, programs and funding structures through which health care is provided. This announcement speaks directly to CPA’s advocacy efforts to enhance access to psychological services,” says CPA’s Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Karen Cohen.

Background: Psychological treatments:

- are proven effective in treating a wide range of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and substance abuse. People with depression who are treated with psychological therapy tend to relapse less frequently than those treated with medication.
- help people manage chronic health problems and conditions like heart disease, cancer and chronic pain.
- are less expensive than, and at least as effective as, medication for a number of common mental health conditions like depression and anxiety.

The Canadian Psychological Association 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 professional association for psychology.

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