



Mood Disorders Society of Canada
La Société Pour Les Troubles de L'Humeur du Canada

For Immediate Release

Federal Budget Reduces Stigma of Mental Illness

Ottawa, March 19, 2007 – Mental illness has for far too long been ignored by governments in Canada even as depression has reached epidemic proportions and Canada's suicide rate has risen to among the highest in the developed world. The Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) congratulates Canada's new government on doing something about it in today's budget. **The Canadian Mental Health Commission** will be an invaluable resource for all Canadians. We know that by dealing openly and directly with mental illnesses and positively promoting mental health that billions of dollars can be saved and the lives of Canadians can be dramatically improved. Canada's new government has demonstrated that they understand the needs of the mental health community.

"We applaud the government on this important decision," said Phil Upshall, National Executive Director of MDSC. "We look forward to working with the government, the Honourable Michael Kirby, Chair of the Commission, and our partners at CAMIMH to make the Commission a success."

Mental illness has an impact on all Canadians. More than one-in-five will be affected by a mental illness in their lifetime. Mental illness is also particularly worrisome for our First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities where the rate of suicide is more than twice the rate than in the general population. It is also extremely challenging in Canadian correctional facilities which are overwhelmed by inmates who would be better served through access to mental health support services.

MDSC congratulates Prime Minister Harper and his team in the Senate and House of Commons for their exceptional hard work and commitment to improving the lives of Canadians suffering from mood disorders. We also appreciate the efforts of Minister Clement and his team, Parliamentary Secretary Stephen Fletcher, and Minister Flaherty who have shown great leadership on this issue. The Mood Disorders Society of Canada joins with its partners at the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) and with its partners in the research community, particularly the Institute of Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction, in anticipating a speedy establishment of the announced Commission.

The Mood Disorders Society of Canada is a national, not-for-profit, volunteer driven organization that is committed to improving the quality of life for people affected by depression, bipolar disorder and other related disorders.

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