



Mood Disorders Society of Canada

Société pour les troubles de l'humeur du Canada

www.mooddisorderscanada.ca

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Mood Disorders Society of Canada encourages Provincial Health Ministers to Prioritize Mental Health

In a letter sent to all provincial and territorial Health Ministers, Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) urges the Health Ministers to bring mental illness to the forefront of their discussions at their upcoming meeting in Halifax November 24th and 25th, 2011 and to ensure that, as they work towards the 2014 health care accord, mental illness services and supports are increased to adequately address the epidemic of mental illness in Canada.

MDSC believes that shortages within the mental health system are causing significant problems for individuals with mental illnesses, their families and caregivers.

“Canadians in every province are looking to their respective provincial and territorial Ministries of Health to adequately address their mental health care needs. From a health care systems perspective, dedicated funding for mental illness remains unacceptably low and not proportionate to the burden of illness. While mental illnesses constitute more than fifteen per cent of the disease burden in Canada, only six percent of total health funding is allocated to mental health care in the last health care accord in fiscal year 2003/04”.

The letters to the Health Ministers included the results of a September 2011 pan-Canadian opinion survey of the mental health community by MDSC. The Canadian mental health community spoke up and expressed serious concerns over shortages in many aspects of the mental health system causing significant problems for individuals with mental illnesses, their families and caregivers. Thirty-Five (35%) of the respondents with a mental illness waited more than 12 months for a diagnosis. Fifty-Six (56%) reported that their number one funding priority was to shorten wait times to get mental health services (from patient request to time of receipt of services).

MDSC asked the Health Ministers to:

- Place mental health at the forefront of the agenda during the upcoming Health Accord negotiations;
- Dedicated funding for mental illness proportionate to the burden of illness and include currently unfunded services for treatment;
- Prioritize mental illness and psychiatric services in the wait times strategy.

About the Mood Disorders Society of Canada

Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) is a national, not for profit, consumer driven, voluntary health charity committed to ensuring that the voices of consumers, family members and caregivers are heard on issues relating to mental health and mental illness; and in particular with regard to depression, bipolar illness and other associated mood disorders. MDSC fulfills its mandate through an active partnership approach that engages like-minded organizations in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

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