



Mood Disorders Society of Canada

La Société Pour Les Troubles de L'Humeur du Canada

For immediate release

They got it right! Mood Disorders Society of Canada Commends the Recommendations from the Senate Report on Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction

Ottawa, May 9, 2006 – The Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) welcomes *Out of the Shadows at Last – Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addictions Services in Canada* as a forward-looking document that addresses a neglected but urgent concern for many Canadians.

"This report, with its broadly-based and thoughtful recommendations, helps to shine a much needed federal light on our concerns. It translates our hopes and aspirations for a responsive, recovery-oriented system into practical recommendations which we strongly endorse," says Phil Upshall, Executive Director of the MDSC.

"I have to say they got it right! It is a delight to see recommendations for change which are reflected through the eyes of those who use the system," he adds. "We are particularly pleased to see the value of self-help and peer-support given the acknowledgement it deserves. We know how important a role we play in providing support, sharing resources and advocating for change – because, as the largest National voice for consumers and families, we've been there."

The MDSC is encouraged by the Committee's focus on encouraging partnerships in research and knowledge exchange. "Consumer and family groups across this country have an important role to play in informing and translating research into accessible user-friendly resources and in getting this information into the hands of Canadians who can use it." The Committee is also right in identifying stigma as a barrier for seeking treatment and community engagement. "The MDSC lauds its recommendation to fund a multi-year strategy to enhance mental health literacy under the guidance of an arms-length Mental Health Commission. It will take real resources and the creation of a separate Mental Health Transition Fund to kick start change and encourage the provinces and territories to move towards a community-based approach to service delivery is just what is needed," says Upshall.

"Promoting mental health and improving the lives of those with mental illness and addictions is going to take coordinated effort to implement by all levels of government," says Upshall, "but finally Canadians have a solid and thoughtful plan for moving forward. We urge the Honorable Tony Clement, Minister of Health to give serious consideration to the recommendations put forward and move quickly to structuring the Mental Health Commission. With one in five Canadians affected by mental health issues this is too important an issue to ignore."

About the Mood Disorders Society of Canada

The Mood Disorders Society of Canada is one of the leading national, voluntary health organizations in the fields of depression, bipolar illness, and associated mood disorders. MDSC's website - www.mooddorderscanada.ca is one of the most visited mental health websites in Canada for information about mental illnesses.

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