

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

## The Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health Welcomes Nominations for the 2016 Champions of Mental Health Awards

(Ottawa, Ontario) January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. Today, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) has officially opened nominations for the *Champions of Mental Health Awards* for 2016. The annual *Champions Awards* is an event devoted to recognizing outstanding individuals and organizations for their mental health contributions in their communities and across the country.

Nominations will be accepted in the following categories:

***The Sharon Johnston Champion of Mental Health Award for Youth*** - Any Canadian 21 and younger who has shown leadership in his or her community in promoting mental health and or mental illness awareness, or any organizations dedicated to providing services for youth

***Media***- Any media personality or outlet who has contributed to public awareness of mental health or mental illness awareness

***Workplace Mental Health***- Any employer or employee who has contributed to creating a mentally healthy workplace for staff

***Community Organization***- Any organization that has provided great public service to community members experiencing mental illness

***Community Individual***- Any person, who through personal commitment has increased awareness about mental illness or reduced stigma in his or her community

***Parliamentarian***- Any provincial or federal Parliamentarian who has advanced the mental health agenda in Canada

***Researcher or Clinician***- Anyone who through their work as a researcher or clinician has advanced the mental health agenda in Canada

As of 2016, the Youth Award will be renamed the 'The Sharon Johnston Champion of Mental Health Award for Youth' in honour of Her Excellency Sharon Johnston's contribution to mental health in Canada.

"Each year, the *Champions of Mental Health Awards* are an exciting opportunity to celebrate individuals and organizations for their contributions to mental health," said Fred Phelps, CAMIMH Campaign Chair 2016. "We are proud to recognize their efforts in raising awareness about mental health and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness".

The annual *Champions of Mental Health Awards* gala brings together people with lived experience of mental health problems and illnesses, political decision makers, business leaders, members of the national media, sponsors and other stakeholders to celebrate individuals and

organizations whose contributions have earned them the accolade as *Champions of Mental Health*. The gala, presented by Bell as part of the Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative, will be held May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016, at the Shaw Convention Centre in Ottawa. CAMIMH would like to recognize its corporate sponsors who make the Champions Awards a success each year, in particular Bell (Presenting Sponsor), the Mental Health Commission of Canada (Gold Sponsor), and Lundbeck Canada (Silver Sponsor).

CAMIMH encourages Canadians to nominate their peers by completing the short online nomination form.

"As 1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental illness in a given year, we truly believe that mental health awareness is essential. In honoring a group of Canadians for their remarkable contributions in mental illness, we hope to make a difference in Canada's mental health".

To nominate a Champion, please visit [camimh.ca](http://camimh.ca) for details. Submissions will be accepted until February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

#### **Bell Let's Talk Day is January 27**

The sixth annual Bell Let's Talk Day is rapidly approaching. For every text message, wireless and long distance call made by Bell Aliant and Bell Canada customers on January 27, or for every tweet using #BellLetsTalk, and every Facebook share of the Bell Let's Talk Day image at [Facebook.com/BellLetsTalk](https://www.facebook.com/BellLetsTalk), Bell will donate 5 cents to support Canadian mental health programs. On Bell Let's Talk Day 2015, a record 122,150,772 calls, tweets, texts, calls and shares resulted in Bell committing a further \$6,107,538.60 to Canadian mental health programs.

Bell's donations are made at no extra charge to Bell Let's Talk Day participants, though normal long distance or text charges if any, apply.

#### **About Bell Let's Talk**

The Bell Let's Talk initiative promotes Canadian mental health with national awareness and anti-stigma campaigns, like Clara's Big Ride for Bell Let's Talk and Bell Let's Talk Day, and significant Bell funding of community care and access, research, and workplace initiatives. To learn more, please visit [Bell.ca/LetsTalk](http://Bell.ca/LetsTalk).

-30-

*Established in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is an alliance of mental health organizations comprised of health care providers and organizations representing persons with mental illness and their families and caregivers. CAMIMH's mandate is to ensure that mental health is placed on the national agenda so that persons with a lived experience of mental illness and their families receive appropriate access to care and support.*

#### **For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:**

Alexandra Dionne Charest

E-mail: [champions@camimh.ca](mailto:champions@camimh.ca)

Telephone: 514 317-9333 ext.232

Cell: 514 583-9359