



Speaking up for those who are living in silence: CAMIMH advances the policy discussion on mental health in Ottawa

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTAWA, October 4, 2016 – Members from the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) are joined today by the *Faces of Mental Illness* to advocate for robust federal policy surrounding mental health.

The *Faces of Mental Illness*, is a national public awareness campaign during which CAMIMH selects individuals (*Faces*) living in recovery from mental illness to represent the Alliance and act as spokespeople for all Canadians living with mental illness. CAMIMH's *Faces* put a name and a face to various mental illnesses and show parliamentarians that with the right diagnosis, treatment, and support, they can live productive and fulfilling lives.

“For too long, mental health care has been chronically underfunded” said Lisa Crawley, Co-Chair of CAMIMH. “Canada's funding levels rank near the bottom among OECD countries. The biggest challenge facing Canadians experiencing mental illness and mental health issues is timely access to care. In our rural, northern and remote communities, residents have limited availability to mental health services, community services and support. In our urban communities, wait lists are long and burdensome for people who are trying to seek help.” she continued.

CAMIMH comes to Ottawa, during Mental Illness Awareness Week (October 2 – 8), with their newly released mental health policy document entitled “Mental Health Now!”. This [document](#) represents a powerful call to action for all governments and presents concrete recommendations that would improve the mental health of millions of Canadians.

“The federal government is working towards negotiating a new health accord with the provinces and have indicated that mental health is one of their top priorities” said Chris Summerville, Co-Chair for CAMIMH. “We hope that senior officials use this consensus paper, reached by 17 national mental health organizations, as the starting point for developing better mental health policy. We have over 50 meetings with parliamentarians to get our point across that the time to act is now.”

CAMIMH would like to thank their generous sponsors who make their advocacy and campaign work possible: Bell Let's Talk, Lundbeck Canada Inc., The Mental Health Commission of Canada, Innovative Medicine's Canada, and Impact Public Affairs.

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Established in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is an alliance of national 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 receive a copy of *Mental Health Now!*, please contact:

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