

MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health Calls Upon the Federal Government to Take Further Action on Mental Health Care

OTTAWA, July 13, 2020 – Today, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is releasing its Mental Health Action Plan [*Better Access and System Performance for Mental Health Services in Canada*](#). Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the steady increase in demand for mental health care suggests Canadians need better, more accessible mental health care services from coast to coast to coast.

The CAMIMH membership, which is comprised of 13 national mental health groups representing health care providers and people with mental illness, is putting forth six recommendations to the federal government to provide Canadians with better access to the mental health services and supports they need. These recommendations include CAMIMH’s previous calls to support a national *Mental Health Parity Act*.

“While we have consistently spoken about the need to reduce stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness, we must broaden our focus to identifying and implement policy solutions to improve timely access to mental health services and supports,” said Glenn Brimacombe, Chair of CAMIMH’s Public Affairs Committee.

Canadians want and need more timely, affordable and easy to access mental health services. A 2018 Statistics Canada survey found that (43.8%) of respondents felt their needs were either unmet (some care was needed but none was received), or only partially met (some care was received but was not sufficient). As Canada continues to experience a growing demand for appropriate mental health services and programs, particularly in a world of COVID-19, we need to reassess current systems and measures and meet this increased need.

CAMIMH’s recommendations outline the need for the federal government, working collaboratively with the provinces and territories, and others, to invest in sustainable evidence-based mental health services and supports. For several years CAMIMH has advocated for a new Mental Health Parity Act, which would recognize that mental health is valued equally to physical health. Other asks include implementing a national universal pharmacare program, and providing funding to the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

“We want mental health to be placed firmly on the national agenda so that individuals with lived experience receive timely and appropriate access to care and support,” said Ellen Cohen, Co-Chair of CAMIMH. “We envision a country where all Canadians enjoy good mental health, and mental illness is treated equally with physical illnesses.”

CAMIMH has been a leading voice in Canada advocating for mental health support and federal investment at the national level. In 2016 CAMIMH released [*Mental Health Now!*](#), a seminal document with a powerful call-to-action for all governments in the lead up to the 2017 bi-lateral health accords that were signed by the federal, and provincial/ territorial governments, and contained a five-point action plan.

To access the full Mental Health Action Plan and to learn more about CAMIMH's advocacy please visit camimh.ca.

-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 media requests or for more information, please contact:

Rita Rahmati

647-289-9774 | rita@impactcanada.com