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Investments in Mental Health are a Step Forward, but More Must Be Done, says CPA

April 18, 2024 (Ottawa) – In releasing the federal government’s 2024 budget, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) welcomes the \$500 million over four years earmarked for a *Youth Mental Health Fund* and understands the need and impact of access to early treatment.

The CPA, however, continues to express its deep disappointment with the government’s unwillingness to deliver on its long-promised Canada Mental Health Transfer, valued at \$4.5 billion over 5 years. Knowing the rates of reported depression and anxiety continue to be significantly higher than pre-COVID levels, there is much more the federal government can do to support timely access to psychological services. The CPA continues to call on the federal government to establish a companion piece of legislation to the *Canada Health Act* called the *Mental Health and Substance Use Health Care For All Parity Act*.

“Having long-term, dedicated funding for mental health is critical to ensure that an increasing number of the people of Canada receive improved and expanded access to publicly funded mental health services on a timely basis”, said Dr. Lisa Votta-Bleeker, CEO of the CPA. In a recent Mental Health Report Card released by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH), Canadians gave the federal government a grade of “F” in their level of satisfaction in improving access to mental health care services. Clearly, there is room for the government to do more.

The CPA is pleased to see a suite of new investments that support Canada’s research ecosystem, including: a multi-year funding commitment to the three granting councils (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC) and improved alignment and coordination between them; increased scholarship funding for master’s and doctoral students, as well as post-doctoral fellowships; and funding for CANARIE to support overall connectivity within a digital world. “Research is the driver of discovery and innovation,” said Dr. Eleanor Gittens, “we welcome these investments that will propel Canada further in terms of its standard of living and overall quality of life.”

With the announcement of the *Mental Health of Black Canadians Fund*, the CPA looks forward to working with the Public Agency of Canada to fully leverage its potential in terms of increasing health equity and addressing mental health and its determinants for Black Canadians. “Anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination are key contributors to health and social inequities faced by diverse Black Canadian communities; a fund such as this is a much-needed initiative for Black Canadians,” said Dr. Gittens.

The CPA is very encouraged to see that psychologists working in rural and remote areas are now eligible for the *Canada Student Loan Forgiveness Program*.

In supporting investments in Indigenous mental health, the CPA looks forward to working with Indigenous Services Canada and others to improve access to mental health services.

There is no health without our mental health. The CPA stands ready to work with the federal government and others to find innovative and sustainable solutions that support the health and well-being of the people of Canada – our future depends on it.

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About the CPA

The Canadian Psychological Association is the national voice for the science, practice, and education of psychology in the service of the health and welfare of Canadians. The CPA is Canada's largest association for psychology and represents psychologists in public and private practice, university educators and researchers, as well as students. Psychologists are the country's largest group of regulated and specialized mental health providers, making our profession a key resource for the mental health treatment Canadians need.

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