

FEDERAL PROPOSAL IDENTIFIES MENTAL HEALTH AS A PRIORITY SEEKS MORE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HEALTH SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

February 8, 2023 (Ottawa) – The Canadian Psychological Association was very pleased to see the Prime Minister and Premiers meet face-to-face to discuss the future of health care – the most important public policy issue on the minds of Canadians.

In addition to new federal monies that will go to the provinces and territories via the Canada Health Transfer, the CPA recognizes that \$25 billion has been set aside for the provinces and territories to invest in a number of “bi-lateral” priorities which include access to timely and equitable mental health and substance use health services.

However, the CPA was very disappointed to see that the federal government has not lived up to its promise to create a Canada Mental Health Transfer which was valued at \$4.5 billion over 5 years. “For too long, access to mental health care has lived in the shadows of our publicly funded health system. In absence of a protected funding envelope, there is no guarantee that federal dollars will be invested into expanding access to mental health and substance use health services through the Canada Health Transfer,” said Dr. Karen Cohen.

“The CPA looks forward to seeing what the priorities of the provinces and territories will be, how much they will be investing, and what impact investments will have on the mental health of the people of Canada,” said Dr. Cohen. Access to mental health care is limited in Canada because so much of it is provided in communities by psychologists and other non-physicians whose services our public health systems do not cover. The CPA believes strongly that Canada’s primary care delivery models need to be expanded to include psychologists. We need to free up family physicians to practice primary care and deliver specialized mental health care to people who need it, from those trained and licensed to deliver it.

The CPA was pleased to see a significant focus and investment placed on the need for a more robust data governance framework that will play a pivotal role in measuring, managing, and monitoring the overall performance of the health system.

“Today’s proposal sets the stage for all governments to be bold in imaging how evidence-based mental health care provided by regulated professionals, such as psychologists, can be effectively integrated into our publicly funded health system,” said CPA CEO Dr. Karen Cohen. “Now, more than ever, it is essential that all governments get on the same side of the table and work in collaboration to transform our systems from ones that are provider based to ones that are patient and service based.”

The CPA looks forward to working with both levels of government and their agencies to ensure the people of Canada get the timely care they need, when they need it, where they need it, from the provider trained and licensed to deliver it. There is no health without mental health.

About the Canadian Psychological Association

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) 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. Learn more at www.cpa.ca.

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