



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-**(St.John's, Newfoundland) February 3, 2014. Today, in honour of Psychology Month, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) has joined forces with the Association of Psychology in Newfoundland and Labrador (APNL) to highlight the need to enhance access to mental health services across Canada through the launch of the national *Mind Your Mental Health* Campaign.

The campaign aims to help increase awareness among the public about psychological topics and disorders and how to prevent, manage and treat them. The campaign also encourages the public, to write their provincial and territorial governments to let them know that Canadians need better access to treatments provided by psychologists, in the public health care system.

“Despite the fact that one in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem in a given year, only one-third of those will receive the help they need,” said CPA President Dr. Wolfgang Linden. “We have psychological treatments that work, and experts trained to deliver them. Yet the services of psychologists are not funded by provincial health insurance plans, which make them inaccessible to most Canadians. Waitlists are excessively long, and insurance to cover these services is minimal.”

Together we are urging local politicians to increasing access to psychologists by implementing the following recommendations:

1. Help increase awareness among the public and government about mental health– its importance to the success and well being of individuals, families and the workplace and its impact on physical health.
2. Provide information to the public about psychological topics and disorders and how to prevent, manage and treat them. Information can help to improve awareness, assist coping and reduce stigma.
3. Help get mental health help to people when they need it. Psychological services are not sufficiently available to Canadians. The services of psychologists, the country's largest group of licensed and specialized mental health care providers, are not covered by public health insurance plans. Encourage the public, and other stakeholders in health, to let their governments know that Canadians need better access to treatments provided by psychologists, in the public health care system.

Visit <http://mymh.ca>

About:

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is the national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Canada. With almost 7,000 members and affiliates, CPA is Canada's largest association for psychology.

The Association of Psychology in Newfoundland Labrador (APNL) was formed in 1976 and became incorporated in 1985. It is a voluntary organization dedicated to furthering the discipline and profession of psychology in this province. Visit our website for more information: <http://www.nlpsych.ca/>

Since 2005, the goal of Psychology Month is to generate grassroots activities that will raise Canadians' awareness of the role psychology plays in their lives and in their communities. Psychology Month encourages all members of the psychology profession to connect with their communities and show them the value and benefits of their work. Psychologists are encouraged to organize local public education and outreach activities.

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Let your government know that access to a psychologist is important to you. Click to request increased access to a psychologist in the public healthcare system. **Let them know!**

### One in Five

At least this many Canadians are diagnosed with a mental illness, and this ratio is increasing every day.

### By 2020...

The WHO predicts that depression will become the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of disability in the world for all ages and both genders.

### Impact on Disability

The impact of mental illness on disability is **1.5x** greater than that of all cancers, and **7x** that of all infectious diseases.

And yet, access to psychologists is very limited in the public healthcare system. Waitlists are excessively long, and insurance to cover these services are minimal.

### Who is minding your mental health?

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CAMPAIGN GOALS ([HTTP://MYMH.CA/CAMPAIGN-CPA/](http://MYMH.CA/CAMPAIGN-CPA/))

#### Campaign Goals

1. **Help increase awareness among the public and government about mental health**— its importance to the success and well being of individuals, families and the workplace and its impact on physical health.
2. **Provide information to the public about psychological topics and disorders and how to prevent, manage and treat them.** Information can help to improve awareness, assist coping and reduce stigma.
3. Help get mental health help to people when they need it. Psychological services are not sufficiently available to Canadians. The services of psychologists, the country's largest

group of licensed and specialized mental health care providers, are not covered by public health insurance plans. **Encourage the public, and other stakeholders in health, to let their governments know that Canadians need better access to treatments provided by psychologists, in the public health care system.**

As a constituent in your riding, I am writing about my concerns regarding access to psychological services, because the mental health needs of our Province are not being met. Our success and economic prosperity depends on the health of its citizens. An important, but all too often neglected aspect of health is psychological health.

One of the greatest challenges faced when caring for the mental health of Canadians is the significant barriers to accessing mental health services. Despite the staggering statistic fact that one in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem in a given year, only one-third of those will receive the help they need. We have psychological treatments that work, and experts trained to deliver them. Yet the services of psychologists are not funded by provincial health insurance plans, which make them inaccessible to most Canadians.

When available, publically funded services are often in short supply and wait lists are long and steadily growing. In addition, the cost of mental illness in Canada is estimated at 51 billion dollars annually, so we must act now and be innovative in our approach.

When compared to other First World countries, Canada has clearly fallen behind. Countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, The Netherlands, and Finland, have all launched mental health initiatives which include covering the services of psychologists through public health systems. These initiatives are proving both cost and clinically effective.

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) recently released an independent report by a group of internationally recognized health economists. The report, 'An Imperative for Change', ([goo.gl/dlUjp](http://goo.gl/dlUjp)) states that the delivery of mental health services can be characterized as "a silent crisis" and provides a business case, and proposes models for improved access to psychological services that can be implemented in our province.

We urge you to affirm your commitment to our province's health and specifically to increasing access to psychologists by implementing the following recommendations from the report:

- Adapt the United Kingdom's publicly funded model for Improved Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) in the provinces and territories. Under this program psychologists and low intensity therapists deliver care for people with the most common mental health problems: depression and anxiety
- Integrate psychologists on primary care teams so that mental health problems are addressed at the right time, in the right place, by the right provider.

- Include psychologists on specialist care teams in secondary and tertiary care facilities for health and mental health conditions.
- Expand the public service private insurance coverage and promote employer support for psychological services. Canadian employers could expect to recover \$6 to \$7 billion annually with attention to prevention, early identification and treatment of mental health problems among their workforces.

Thank you for your attention on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,