

CMHA, ONTARIO AND OFCMHAP APPLAUD PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT'S THREE YEAR COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES IN ONTARIO

(TORONTO, March 30, 2011) – CMHA, Ontario and OFCMHAP applaud the Ontario Government's commitment to address the needs of the millions of Ontarians who know first-hand the impacts of mental illness and addictions. We strongly support and await the release of a new 10-year mental health strategy. This budget's commitment to grow funding for mental health services to \$93 million per year by 2013/14 is a very positive and important step.

"This is a tremendous breakthrough," says Lorne Zon, CEO, Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario. "It's paramount that the government invests in mental health and addiction services. We believe that starting with the needs of our children and youth for mental health and addiction services will deliver real progress and positive change. We do know that the earlier we intervene, the better."

The need to act now was clearly spelled out in the recent report by the Select Committee of the Ontario Legislature and supported by all parties. Mental health and addiction issues touch more Ontarians than any other health condition. One in five Ontarians will experience a serious mental illness during their lifetime.

"We would like to see the government invest in early diagnoses and early treatment across the lifespan as well as leading the charge to address the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health issues," continues Zon. "People just don't understand that mental illness is like most other physical illnesses, it's treatable."

"Investing in children's mental health services is unanimously supported by the Mental Health and Addictions Alliance of Ontario," says David Kelly, Executive Director, Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs (OFCMHAP).

"The commitment to a multi-year funding increase of 3% for community based mental health and addictions services is also welcomed. Equity of access to needed services for all Ontarians is another key position of the Alliance," says Mr. Kelly. "These investments will allow us to move ahead with a core basket of services that can be accessed by those in need, regardless of where they live."

About CMHA, Ontario

Founded in 1952, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario, is a non-profit, charitable organization committed to improving the lives of people with mental illness and their families, and to the promotion of mental health for all Ontarians. CMHA, Ontario achieves its mission through public education, applied research and policy analysis, and advocating for healthy public policy and an effective and efficient health system. Ontario's 33 local CMHA branches provide direct services and supports to communities across the province. Learn more at www.ontario.cmha.ca.

About Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs

The Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs (OFCMHAP), also known as **the Federation**, is a non-profit corporation with over 220 member organizations from across Ontario. The goal of the Federation is to enable its members to provide high quality, comprehensive and accessible community mental health and addiction services. To achieve that goal the Federation represents the views of its members in relation to service development, planning and coordination, funding and administrative matters, as well as development of provincial policy and legislation. Learn more at www.ofcmhap.on.ca.

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