



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canadians Give Provinces Failing Grades on Access to Mental Health Services

March 21, 2023 (OTTAWA)—In surveying Canadian residents who have accessed mental health services in the past year, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) found that the provinces received a collective grade of “D” in providing access to mental health professionals.

“It is deeply concerning to know that close to half (**47%**) of all respondents gave the provinces a failing grade of ‘F’,” said Ellen Cohen, CAMIMH Co-Chair. “Now, more than ever, we need accessible, timely and inclusive access to mental health care services. There can be no health without mental health.”

The survey also found:

- Only **23%** think that mental health supports are meeting their needs.
- **12%** accessed a mental health service or substance use health service over the past year. Of those, **70%** were able to access the services they wanted, and **69%** are confident in navigating the mental health system.
- **91%** of respondents felt that they should not have to wait more than a month for mental health care with 39% saying wait times should not exceed one week.
- **89%** are supportive of setting standards, benchmarks or guidelines for wait times.
- An overwhelming majority feel that both the federal (**81%**) and provincial (**89%**) governments need to increase the availability of mental health care providers to ensure timely access to care.

“People are not getting the care they need and that must change,” said Dr. Kim Hollihan, CAMIMH Co-Chair. “Clearly, all governments need to up their game to improve and expand timely access to mental health and substance use health services across the country.”

CAMIMH calls on the federal, provincial and territorial governments to ensure a significant portion of the federal government’s recently announced \$196 billion health funding commitment is invested to improve and expand access to mental health and substance use health programs, services and supports. While the federal government has broken its promise to introduce a \$4.5 billion Canada Mental Health Transfer, CAMIMH strongly believes that the provinces and territories must be held accountable for these investments and their on-the-ground impact.

CAMIMH MEMBERS

Canadian Association of Social Workers

Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention

Canadian Consortium for Early Prevention in Psychosis

Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association

Canadian Federation of Mental Health Nurses

Canadian Medical Association

Canadian Mental Health Association

Canadian Psychiatric Association

Canadian Psychological Association

Community Addictions and Peer Support Association

Medical Psychotherapy Association of Canada

National Initiative for Eating Disorders

National Network for Mental Health

Schizophrenia Society of Canada

Psychosocial Rehabilitation Canada

The College of Family Physicians Canada

CAMIMH looks forward to working with all levels of government, and others, to improve timely access to publicly funded mental health and substance use health programs, services and supports. Our mental health matters.

As one of the leading national mental health alliances in Canada, CAMIMH continues to strongly advocate for parity in funding between mental health, substance use health and physical health care. In June 2021, CAMIMH released [*From Out of the Shadows and Into the Light...Achieving Parity in Access to Care Among Mental Health, Substance Use and Physical Health*](#), detailing what legislative steps the federal government can take to introduce a *Mental Health and Substance Use Health Care For All Parity Act*.

To see the full survey results, please visit our website at camimh.ca.

-30-

Established in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is an alliance of national 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 more information, please contact:

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