

November 20, 2014

The Honourable Rona Ambrose, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Health  
70 Columbine Driveway, Tunney's Pasture  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0K9

**Re: Supporting the Extension of the Mental Health Commission of  
Canada**

Dear Minister Ambrose,

On behalf of the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) we are writing to reaffirm our commitment to a renewed mandate for the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) in the 2015 federal budget.

CAMIMH is a non-profit organization comprised of an alliance of 18 national health care providers as well as organizations which represent individuals with lived experience of mental illness. Established in 1998, CAMIMH provides collaborative national leadership to assure individuals living with mental illness receive the services and supports they require for recovery. CAMIMH also advocates for government policies aimed at reducing the burden of mental illness on the Canadian population and economy.

When the Government of Canada created the MHCC in 2007, Canada was the only G8 country without a mental health strategy. Since the release of the MHCC's *Changing Directions, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada*, Canada has become a respected world leader on mental health issues.

The *Mental Health Strategy for Canada* has been a leading priority for the Commission and was successfully completed and released in 2012. The MHCC actively engaged provinces and territories from coast to coast to coast to help encourage implementation of the Strategy's over 100 recommendations, and continuously works with partners and stakeholders across Canada to address its strategic directions. The Strategy has provided Canadians with a detailed blueprint for the change needed to transform the nation's mental health system and improve the mental health and well-being of all Canadians.

In our 2015 pre-budget submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, CAMIMH recommended that the MHCC's mandate and funding be extended beyond its original allocation to 2017. Our submission stated:

*In 2007, the Government of Canada invested \$130 million to establish the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) to act as a catalyst for improving the mental health system and changing the attitudes and behaviours of Canadians regarding mental health issues. The MHCC is funded by Health Canada and has a 10-year mandate (2007-2017). CAMIMH had*

**CAMIMH Members**

Canadian Association for  
Suicide Prevention

Canadian Association of  
Occupational Therapists

Canadian Association of Social  
Workers

Canadian Coalition for  
Seniors' Mental Health

Canadian Counselling and  
Psychotherapy Association

Canadian Federation of Mental  
Health Nurses

Canadian Medical Association

Canadian Mental Health  
Association

Canadian Nurses Association

Canadian Psychiatric  
Association

Canadian Psychological  
Association

The College of Family  
Physicians Canada

HealthCareCAN

Mood Disorders Society of  
Canada

Psychosocial Rehabilitation  
Canada

Schizophrenia Society of  
Canada

**Affiliate Members**

Union of Psychiatric Nurses  
of BC

*advocated for the creation of the MHCC, has steadfastly congratulated the Federal Government on implementing the MHCC, and has worked tirelessly in support of the work and mandate of the MHCC.*

*The Mental Health Commission role and work is of utmost importance to the advancement of mental health in Canada. There is far too much work in mental health which needs to be accomplished not to have this centralized facilitator of collaborative approaches to change.*

*CAMIMH strongly advocates for the extension of this mandate. The MHCC acts as a catalyst for change and improvement and we firmly believe Canadians and the mental health community requires the ongoing presence of the MHCC.*

*CAMIMH recommends the Government of Canada provides an extension of the term for the Mental Health Commission of Canada with a revised mandate to build upon the progress and accomplishments made thus far. Term and mandate to be identified by the Government of Canada.*

It is our belief that the extension of the MHCC mandate beyond 2017 is of utmost importance to advancing the mental health agenda in Canada and to implementing more of the Mental Health Strategy recommendations. Too much crucial work still needs to be accomplished by MHCC and partner organizations to allow its mandate to expire before the completion of its responsibilities.

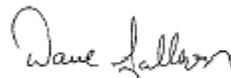
On behalf of all CAMIMH, please consider this vitally important recommendation for Canadians' mental health. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. John Higenbottam

CAMIMH , Co-Chair



Dave Gallson

CAMIMH, Co-Chair

C.c.

David Goldbloom, Chair, MHCC Board of Directors

Louise Bradley, President and CEO, Mental Health Commission of Canada