

MENTAL HEALTH TABLE¹

May 30, 2011

Dear Sir/Madam:

We are pleased to provide you with a copy of the final report from the Mental Health Table Forum, entitled *Which Doors Lead to Where? How to Enhance Access to Mental Health Service: Barriers, Facilitators and Opportunities for Canadians' Mental Health*².

The report is the result of a significant effort by a broad cross-section of Canadian health care stakeholders. In October 2010, the Mental Health Table Forum hosted 80 delegates including health care providers, government representatives, consumers of mental health care, as well as organizations representing consumers and providers of care and other NGOs. The purpose of this meeting was to explore issues and perspectives relevant to advancing mental health promotion and front line mental health care delivery in Canada.

Access to health services is a key issue for Canadians and governments at all levels. Providing timely access to high-quality health care by reducing wait times for assessment and treatment is rightly one of the top priorities for health care policy-makers in Canada. Health care priorities need to include a focus on mental health; namely the mental health conditions, like anxiety and depression that affect 1 in 5 Canadians annually as well as the psychological factors that affect how well people maintain their health and manage their illness.

¹ Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists

Canadian Association of Social Workers

Canadian Pharmacists Association

Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists

Canadian Medical Association

Canadian Nurses Association

Canadian Physiotherapy Association

Canadian Psychiatric Association

Canadian Psychological Association (*co-Chair*)

Canadian Federation of Mental Health Nurses

Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Canada

The College of Family Physicians of Canada (*co-Chair*)

² Production of the forum was made possible with a financial contribution from Health Canada and the in-kind support of MHT member associations. The views expressed during the Forum or in its materials do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada.

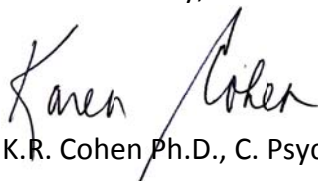
The attached report provides a synthesis of the working group discussions and the recommendations made by the delegates in attendance about how Canada can do a better job funding mental health services and supports and making them accessible to Canadians. The recommendations centered around eight key themes:

- Review and improve funding models to ensure access to necessary services and supports.
- Establish national standards for mental health care and develop standards for wait times for mental health services and supports.
- Develop and maintain systems that respond to consumer need and facilitate efficiency and effectiveness.
- Enhance organization, integration and collaboration with stakeholders across all concerned sectors.
- Include consumers at the decision-making table.
- Enhance mental health promotion, prevention and early identification by increasing mental health literacy and reducing stigma.
- Train health care providers to work collaboratively and to respond to needs of populations within a system that supports collaborative practice.
- Advocate for legislative change to enhance access and achieve parity for mental health treatments.

As you will see, this report presents a comprehensive overview of the opportunities and the challenges facing the mental health community in Canada today. With the renewal of the federal-provincial health care transfer arrangements only two years away, now is the time to bring mental health to the forefront of health care discussions. This report and its recommendations can facilitate health care discussions that acknowledge the millions of people in this country who have mental health issues but for whom accessible and affordable services and supports are critically lacking.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions or comments concerning this document. For more information about this report, the Mental Health Table (MHT), or the Forum, please contact the signatories below who are the MHT's Co-Chairs.

Yours sincerely,



K.R. Cohen Ph.D., C. Psych.

Executive Director

Canadian Psychological Association

kcohen@cpa.ca



Francine Lemire, MD CCFP FCFP CAE

Associate Executive Director Professional Affairs

The College of Family Physicians of Canada

flemire@cfpc.ca