

News Release

Solving Mental Health Problems by Turning Research Into Action

Government of Canada announces \$4.4 million to improve mental health of Canadians

For immediate release –

Winnipeg (July 18, 2008) – Funding of \$4.4 million from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) was announced today by Steven Fletcher, MP for Charleswood-St. James-Assiniboia and Parliamentary Secretary for Health, on behalf of Tony Clement, Minister of Health. This funding will support three research teams investigating how to improve the application of mental health research. The Mental Health Commission of Canada is contributing \$250,000 to one of the projects. The announcement was made at St. Boniface General Hospital.

“Thousands of Canadians and their families deal with the negative effects of mental health problems,” said Mr. Fletcher. “The Government is committed to funding research that will help ensure that these Canadians have access to the best mental healthcare services possible.”

Mr. Fletcher was joined by Dr. Richard Brière, Assistant Director, CIHR's Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction. “CIHR and the Mental Health Commission of Canada have both identified a pressing need for mental health research in Canada,” said Dr. Brière. “This funding is essential because, ultimately, the results will help health service providers, educators and others meet the multifaceted needs of people who suffer from mental health problems.”

“As a catalyst in the field of mental health, the Commission is pleased to support a research team from Winnipeg, the first in Canada, to look at how young adults who suffer from mental health problems make complex decisions in the absence of critical information and helpful decision-making aids,” said Mr. Michael Howlett, President and CEO, Mental Health Commission of Canada. “This research is particularly important in shaping public knowledge about important mental health problems.”

The three funded research projects underwent a rigorous peer-review process before being approved and exemplify CIHR's comprehensive, problem-based approach to funding excellence in health research. The principal investigators and their respective projects are being funded for a period of five years:

- **John Walker** (University of Manitoba) will examine how we can support young adults with anxiety and depression to obtain effective forms of help.
- **Melanie Barwick** (The Hospital for Sick Children) will develop and evaluate an innovative implementation model to bring evidence based practices into both the children's mental health and education sectors.
- **Alison Niccols** (McMaster University) will work with addiction centres' staff and researchers to ensure women with substance use issues and their children receive the best services/treatments.

With this funding, these research teams will develop strategies and guidelines to address mental health issues, and will strive to change perceptions and attitudes towards mental health conditions.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is the Government of Canada's agency for health research. CIHR's mission is to create new scientific knowledge and to catalyze its translation into improved health, more effective health

services and products, and a strengthened Canadian health care system. Composed of 13 Institutes, CIHR provides leadership and support to more than 11,000 health researchers and trainees across Canada. www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) is a non-profit organization created to focus national attention on mental health issues. It is funded by the federal government but operates at arm's length from all orders of government. The Commission's objective is to enhance the health and social outcomes for Canadians living with mental health problems and illnesses. The Commission was announced by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in response to one of the recommendations in the report by the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, entitled "Out of the Shadows at Last." Former Senator Michael Kirby was Chair of the Senate Committee at the time the report was released. <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/>

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