



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Mental health for all

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NEWS RELEASE

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A Step Forward to Big Change in Child and Youth Mental Health

*Important recommendations in Select Standing Committee Report –
The next step is to act boldly*

Vancouver, British Columbia – The Canadian Mental Health Association’s BC Division (CMHA BC) sees yesterday’s release of *Concrete Actions for Systemic Change* by the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth as an important step toward a future of promoting, protecting, and improving the mental health and wellbeing of BC’s children and young people.

The report makes a number of positive and substantive recommendations that if acted upon could make a real difference.

Appointing a Minister for Mental Health, with a budget, mandate, and formal responsibility for services is the right thing to do. This kind of bold action stands to level the playing field, bringing greater equality between physical and mental health. We urge Government to *not* stop here, but to consider the need for the same kind of leadership in adult mental health, and the critical need to ensure substance use problems and addictions are part of the equation.

CMHA BC applauds other recommendations included in the report, including but not limited to,

- A move towards multi-year funding models for existing integrated service delivery models – *this will strengthen systems of care*
- Continued efforts to address systemic issues related to privacy, confidentiality, and information sharing – *this will improve continuity of care while respecting privacy rights*
- The implementation of assessment and treatment wait time targets for children and young people experiencing symptoms – *this will prevent problems becoming more serious*
- Resources for early intervention programs, partnering with non-profit organizations, especially in the area of parent training programs – *building upon existing capacity is a wise investment*

“We have long been concerned that children’s and young people’s mental health and wellbeing has not been given the attention needed,” says Bev Gutray, CEO, CMHA BC. “The work of the Standing Committee has shone a light and made some timely recommendations, but we cannot stop here. The next steps are bold leadership and action, a commitment to staying the course with what we know works, and meeting the challenge of ensuring our system has the future of our young people in mind.”

Support and resources can be found here:

- www.heretohelp.bc.ca - trusted online mental health and addiction information
- www.cmha.bc.ca/how-we-can-help/children-families/confident-parents - CMHA’s parent training program
- www.lttf.ca/youth - CMHA’s community cognitive behavioural course for young people
- www.healthycampuses.ca - CMHA’s provincial efforts to improve mental health on campus

About the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA):

CMHA is Canada’s most established mental health charity and the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health. CMHA helps people access the resources they need to maintain and improve mental health, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness. Each year in BC alone,

CMHA serves more than 100,000 people all across the province. For mental health and addiction information and resources visit www.cmha.ca.

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