



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

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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: February 17, 2015

BC Budget 2015: Key Mental Health Services Missing

More Action Needed in Areas of Child and Youth Mental Health and Community-Based Services says Canadian Mental Health Association

Victoria, British Columbia – The Canadian Mental Health Association’s BC Division (CMHA) is concerned by the absence of key mental health services and supports from Budget 2015. Investments in child and youth mental health and community-based mental health and substance use services are urgently needed.

“Mental health services and supports save lives and they are becoming more and more important to British Columbians,” says Jonathan Morris, Public Policy Director at CMHA BC. “Budget 2015 missed an important opportunity to commit to new investments in the mental health of British Columbians.”

Mental health and substance use was a theme in the Standing Committee on Finance *Report on Budget 2015 Consultations*. This committee of MLAs recommended that government “provide new investments for the prevention and treatment of mental disorders in children and youth.” Unfortunately, this recommendation is missing from Budget 2015.

Estimates in Budget 2015 for MCFD and child and youth mental health services show an increase of just under \$2.8M between 2014/15 and 2017/18. Such a small increase will not reach the 75% of children and youth with a mental health and/or substance use problem who don’t received specialized care.

“We’re happy to see some direct mention of mental health and substance use in a number of Ministry commitments for the year ahead,” says Morris. “However, more action likely is needed to meet these commitments.”

The Ministry of Health has identified a new performance measure designed to reduce the number of people with mental health and/or substance use problems readmitted to hospital within 30 days of discharge.

CMHA BC urges the Ministry to go one step further and commit to reducing the number of people requiring hospitalization in the first place. Both goals require a significant investment in *community-based* mental health and substance use services and support, which is absent from Budget 2015.

While Budget 2015 promises a 2.9% increase in healthcare spending over three years, it is unclear how much of the estimated \$3.0B increase will be allocated to mental health and substance use because a lot of healthcare spending decisions are made at a health authority level.

“Tracking investments in mental health and substance use services and supports needs to be more transparent to ensure a fair share for mental health and substance use,” says Morris.

About the Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division

Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division (CMHA) is part of one of Canada's most established national mental health charities. Our vision is mentally healthy people in a healthy society. As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, CMHA helps people access the community resources they need to build resilience and support recovery from mental illness or addiction. We do

this by building capacity, influencing policy, providing services and developing resources. Each year, CMHA BC together with a network of 17 BC branches provides services and supports to over 140,000 British Columbians. Together we promote mental health for all and support the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness or addiction. To learn more visit www.cmha.bc.ca.

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