

Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health Announces Recipients of the Seventh Annual Champions of Mental Health Awards

Ottawa, October 7, 2009 – The Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) today announced the recipients of the Seventh Annual Champions of Mental Health Awards. The awards will be presented to eight distinguished leaders in the Ballroom of the Chateau Laurier this evening. The Awards are part of Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) a national public education campaign to reduce the stigma of mental illness in Canada. MIAW takes place October 4th-10th 2009 and is coordinated by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH).

“Today we honour eight special Canadians who have made a significant contribution to advancing the mental health agenda in Canada,” said Dr. John Higgenbottam, Co-Chair of CAMIMH. “In their work and in their lives, they have each taken on some of the many challenges we face in the mental health arena. They have spoken openly about their own experiences, have advocated for much-needed research, and have supported programs encouraging diagnosis, treatment and care for the mentally ill in our communities.”

This year’s Champions of Mental Health are:

- **The Hon. Peter MacKay, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence - Public Sector**
The award recognizes the department’s funding and support of mental health initiatives within the Canadian Forces (CF), and Minister MacKay’s personal comments concerning mental health and mental illness issues among Canadian Forces members, many of which are on the public record. Minister MacKay’s commitments have led to the hiring of additional mental health practitioners for the military, the creation of several support centres across the country as well as the launch of the CF Mental Health Awareness Campaign “Be the Difference”.
- **Gen. Walter Natynczyk, Canadian Chief of Defence Staff - Public Sector**
The award recognizes Gen. Natynczyk’s leadership in launching the CF Mental Health Awareness Campaign “Be the Difference”. His commitments have helped reduce the stigma associated with mental illness in the military and encouraged soldiers with mental health issues, specifically operational stress injuries, to come forward and seek help.
- **LCol. Stéphane Grenier, Director of Casualty Support Management at National Defence – Public Sector**
The award recognizes the work of LCol. Grenier and his department on the Operational Stress Injury Social Support Program (OSISS). This program is designed to reduce pervasive stigma and improve social support for CF members, veterans and their families affected by operational stress injuries. LCol. Grenier’s commitment to this program has helped increased awareness of mental health services available to soldiers.
- **The Hon. Dr. Maggie Hodgson – First Nations, Inuit and Métis**
The award recognizes Dr. Hodgson’s extensive involvement in Aboriginal health initiatives in Canada. As the Founder and Executive Director of the Nechi Institute on Alcohol and Drug Education, Dr.

Mental Illness Awareness Week Advisory Panel: Hon. Rémi Bujold, P.C., C.M.; Peter Daniel; Moya Greene; Hon. Otto Lang, P.C., O.C.; Rt. Hon. Don Mazankowski, P.C., O.C.; Hon. David Peterson, P.C., Q.C.; Dr. Rémi Quirion; James Roche; Phil Upshall; Hon. Michael Wilson, P.C., O.C.

Mental Illness Awareness Week is coordinated by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, with support from all of its member organizations. CAMIMH members are: Autism Society Canada • Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists • Canadian Association of Social Workers • Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention • Canadian Coalition for Seniors Mental Health • Canadian Federation of Mental Health Nurses • Canadian Healthcare Association • Canadian Medical Association • Canadian Mental Health Association • Canadian National Committee for Police/Mental Health Liaison • Canadian Nurses Association • Canadian Psychiatric Association • Canadian Psychiatric Research Foundation • Canadian Psychological Association • Mood Disorders Society of Canada • National Network for Mental Health • Native Mental Health Association of Canada • Psychosocial Rehabilitation Canada • Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Canada • Schizophrenia Society of Canada

Hodgson has been the driving force behind many Aboriginal health initiatives including mental health and addictions, family violence, sexual abuse, and residential schools. She is one of the main supporters of mental illness, addiction and support programs in the Aboriginal community.

- **Margaret Trudeau – Media**

The award recognizes Ms. Trudeau's courageous decision to share her experiences of living with bipolar disorder. Ms. Trudeau's actions and advocacy have deepened the awareness of mental illness across the country, and have inspired others living with mental illness to speak out and to seek help when they need it

- **Dr. Donald A. Wasylenki – Research**

The award recognizes Dr. Wasylenki's extensive involvement in mental health research in Canada. He has provided exceptional leadership to the Keenan Research Centre of the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute of St. Michael's Hospital through supporting the development of innovative programs and treatments for the organization and delivery of mental health services.

- **Mary Ann Baynton, Program Director, Great West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace – Private Sector**

The award recognizes Ms. Baynton's commitment to increase education and understanding of mental illnesses in the workplace through the Great West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace. Her advocacy has mobilized employers to take action on mental health issues, and her outstanding leadership has promoted awareness of the prevalence of mental illness across the country.

- **Laurie Hall, Executive Director, A-Way Express – Community**

The award recognizes Ms. Hall's extensive involvement in the mental health community through A-WAY Express, a not-for-profit courier service that provides jobs for people who live with mental health issues. Ms. Hall has provided a supportive environment and exceptional leadership in consumer-survivor initiatives and is a driving force behind the reducing the stigma of mental illness.

About MIAW Sponsors

Mental Illness Awareness Week and the Champions of Mental Health Awards cannot take place without the support of dedicated sponsors. They are: Canada Post, Fleishman-Hillard Canada (PLATINUM); Lamar Transit Advertising, AstraZeneca, Rogers TV (SILVER); Janssen-Ortho Inc., Lilly, Pfizer, GlaxoSmithKline, Rx&D, Lundbeck, Apache Canada Ltd. (BRONZE); Iris the Dragon (FRIENDS).

For more information on Mental Illness Awareness Week, please visit www.miaw-ssmm.ca.

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For more information regarding the Champions Awards, please contact:

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**Mental Illness
Awareness Week**

**Semaine de sensibilisation
aux maladies mentales**

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