

## **\$10 Million in federal funding for Canadian CMHAs**

(July 31, 2015) – The Honourable Candice Bergen, Minister of State for Social Development, announced late yesterday that Canadian Mental Health Association’s across Canada will receive \$10 million over the next three years from the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities.

CMHAs in 13 cities will be receiving the grant will partner with employers and participants with little or no work experience to find and maintain employment.

“This funding builds on CMHA’s strong interest in workplace mental health and aiding people with mental health issues find, get, and keep jobs”, says CMHA Manitoba and Winnipeg’s Executive Director Marion Cooper.

CMHA Manitoba and Winnipeg is one of the CMHAs receiving funding for the project, which will be used to enhance the agency’s existing employment supports to include group workshops, job coaching and on-the-job training.

The funding will support “Creating Opportunity - A National Approach”, a CMHA National Employment Project developed by CMHA Toronto Branch with participating branches and divisions. The Toronto Branch will oversee the project.

Executive Director Steve Lurie says the project “works directly with participants and employers, draws on evidence-based approaches and can expect great results, including supporting 1,300 people get or keep jobs”.

“The partnerships we will build with employers are key”, says Lurie, “This is a demand-side initiative, meaning that employers will be involved throughout and help advance workplace mental health and, in particular, employment opportunities for people who struggle with mental health issues.”

Peter Coleridge, National CEO, CMHA added that “a collaborative project of this scale across CMHAs is unprecedented. This funding will allow us to work directly with many individuals to make their goal of becoming employed reality.”

“The Creating Opportunity initiative is the next step of the work we’ve been doing with employers and unions over the past 15 years”, says Coleridge, referring to CMHA’s Workplace Mental Health Collaborative which includes initiatives such as the now-annual National Bottom Line Conference, Psychological Health and Safety Advisor Certification Program, and the Mental Health Works Program, each which targets business leaders, union representatives, and others with the aim of improving the mental health of Canadian workplaces.

Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver have also been chosen to build on existing capacity created in housing first projects, which works with homeless people to secure housing. As part of the Opportunities Fund, these sites will work with housing first recipients to look for work after they have found housing.

“What our experience tells us is that for people who have struggled with mental illness or mental health difficulties, a job is not just a "job" – it’s often the chance to lead a productive and independent life, one that can contribute to personal recovery”, says Coleridge.

**About the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)**

Founded in 1918, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is one of Canada's oldest not-for-profit organizations. With more than 10,000 staff and volunteers in hundreds of communities across Canada, CMHA provides vital services and support to well over half a million Canadians every year. As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, CMHA facilitates access to the resources people require to maintain and improve mental health and community integration, build resilience and support recovery from mental illness. For mental health and mental illness information, resources and tools and to find a CMHA community location, please go to [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca).

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