

---

## IMPORTANT STEPS, NOT STRIDES, FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE HEALTH

---

**April 12, 2022 (Ottawa)** – In last week’s 2022 federal budget, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) recognized the importance of a series of mental health and substance use health investments, including:

- \$140 million over 2 years for the Wellness Together Canada website
- \$100 million over 3 years for harm reduction, treatment, and prevention at the community level for substance use health
- \$3.7 million over 4 years for mental health supports for black federal public servants
- \$228 million over 2 years improve mental wellness and co-develop mental health and wellness strategies
- \$1.5 billion over 2 years for a minimum of 6,000 affordable housing units that can be built fast
- \$562 million over 2 years to address homelessness for Canadians and priority populations including Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and veterans
- \$45 million over 3 years to assist veterans experiencing homelessness

“Combined, these health and social policy measures are important steps, however more strides need to be taken to improve timely access to publicly funded mental health care services”, said Dr. Karen Cohen, CEO of CPA. This is a critical issue for those affected by COVID-19 global pandemic and particularly so for those with a pre-existing mental health or substance use problems. “More needs to be done to expand coverage to evidence-based mental health services provided by regulated mental health care professionals, such as psychologists.”

The CPA urges the federal government to introduce its proposed Canada Mental Health Transfer and expedite its discussions with the provinces and territories. “We must integrate mental health care into primary health care so that people get the care they need, when and where they need it”, said Dr. Cohen.

The CPA was pleased to learn of the government’s proposed investments into combatting systemic racism, discrimination, and hate. “Inequities in opportunity and the experience of racism and discrimination figure prominently in health and well being, for individuals, communities, economies, and societies,” said Dr. Ada Sinacore, CPA President.

The CPA is concerned, however, that Budget 2022 stopped short of recognizing the need to invest in psychological research to help us understand and better respond to health and community emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Psychosocial research is the foundation of good public policy whose aim is to support wellness for people and the communities in which they live and work.

The CPA was also concerned that the federal student loan forgiveness program did not appear to be expanded beyond physicians and nurses. Given unmet mental health needs in Canada, we must invest in our mental health human resources, inclusive of psychologists and other regulated mental health providers.

“There is no health without our mental health, and now, more than ever, we need governments at all levels to continue to invest in our most important assets...all people living in Canada,” said Dr. Ada Sinacore, CPA President. “The CPA stands ready to work with all governments and others to find innovative and sustainable solutions that support the health and well being of everyone – our future depends on it.”

- 30 -

#### About the CPA

The Canadian Psychological Association is the national voice for the science, practice and education of psychology in the service of the health and welfare of Canadians. The CPA is Canada’s largest association for psychology and represents psychologists in public and private practice, university educators and researchers, as well as students. Psychologists are the country’s largest group of regulated and specialized mental health providers, making our profession a key resource for the mental health treatment Canadians need.

Contact:           Mr. Eric Bollman  
                          Communications Specialist  
                          Canadian Psychological Association  
                          (613) 853-1061  
                          [ebollman@cpa.ca](mailto:ebollman@cpa.ca)