

## ONTARIO MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS ALLIANCE SUPPORTS PROVINCE'S FOCUS ON INCREASING HOUSING

TORONTO, Nov. 25, 2014 – The Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Alliance welcomes phase two of the Ontario government's mental health and addiction strategy, announced today. The second phase of *Open Minds, Healthy Minds* includes a commitment to expand affordable / supportive housing, a critical component of recovery from mental illness and addiction.

"The need for government to expand access to housing with supports across Ontario has long been a priority for the Alliance," said Deborah Sherman, Executive Director of the Ontario Peer Development Initiative. "We know that with the right housing and supports, people recovering from mental illness and addiction gain a renewed sense of dignity and hope and can re-integrate into the community more successfully."

While access to safe, affordable housing is key to recovery, people in Ontario can wait up to six years for a supportive housing unit. In Toronto alone, the waiting list for supportive housing grew from 700 in 2009 to over 7,000 in 2013.

The Alliance, a coalition of organizations and service providers from across the province, has been working since 2011 to ensure that mental health and addictions are a provincial government priority.

"Since the initial launch of *Open Minds, Healthy Minds* in 2011, the Ontario government has invested in supports to improve the capacity and coordination of mental health services for children and youth," said Kimberly Moran, CEO of Children's Mental Health Ontario. "It is encouraging to see that they are now working to tackle the issue of housing, and we are ready and willing to partner in any way we can."

The Alliance was also pleased to see the strategy emphasize the need to ensure that people struggling with mental illness and addiction receive the support they need, when they need it.

"We hear from our clients and families that the mental health system is very difficult to navigate and that it can take months, even years to find the right services," said Mary Alberti, CEO of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario. "Better integration is another crucial area for improvement and we look forward to continuing to support the Ontario government as it rolls out this strategy."

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Children's Mental Health Ontario  
Santé mentale pour enfants Ontario



Mood Disorders Association of Ontario



Canadian Mental Health Association  
Ontario  
Mental health for all



Ontario Peer Development Initiative  
Initiative ontarienne de développement favorisant l'aide entre pairs  
Supporting Consumer/Survivor Initiatives Throughout Ontario  
À l'appui de initiatives des usages survivants à travers l'Ontario



Ontario Association of Patient Councils

VOICE RIGHTS HOPE



ONTARIO HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

**About the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Alliance ([www.vote4mha.ca](http://www.vote4mha.ca)):**

The Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Alliance is a broadly based coalition of provincial organizations from across the continuum of care – from community to hospital services and consumer and family organizations. Its members are:

- Addictions and Mental Health Ontario
- Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- Children’s Mental Health Ontario
- Mood Disorders Association of Ontario
- Ontario Association of Patient Councils
- Ontario Hospital Association
- Ontario Peer Development Initiative
- Schizophrenia Society of Ontario

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