



NEWS RELEASE

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BRITISH COLUMBIA PSYCHOLOGY SUPPORTS CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

Vancouver, BC (November 25, 2005) – The British Columbia Psychological Association is pleased with the Government of Canada's plan to establish a Canadian Mental Health Commission. "Considering that one in five British Columbians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime, the Canadian Mental Health Commission is a very important step for Canadians," stated Wolfgang Linden, BCPA President. "We congratulate Minister Dosanjh and Senator Kirby for taking this bold action." Many British Columbians suffer from mental illnesses, mental disorders and addictions. Many more of us cope daily with the effects of work stress, family problems, abuse or learning problems. The Commission has the potential to play a vital role in coordinating efforts to improve research and services and to reduce discrimination and stigma.

The Minister has given his commitment that governments will work with stakeholder groups that represent patients, their families, professionals, community based services and self-help groups. "The broad and inclusive nature of the Commission and its work is very welcome," stated Dr. John Service, Executive Director of the Canadian Psychological Association and Chair of the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health. "We all know that mental health issues have long been neglected in Canada. Hopefully the Commission will give Canada a comprehensive plan to address these issues in an effective way." "It is encouraging see this level of co-operation between the federal, provincial and territorial governments on something as important as mental health," stated Dr. Linden, "Only through effective collaboration will Canada be able to significantly improve the mental health of all Canadians."

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Since 1977, the BCPA has represented psychologists in British Columbia. It is a voluntary body and is committed to advancing psychology, the interests of psychologists, and the psychological well-being of all British Columbians. The BCPA sponsors professional development and networking activities for members, publishes a quarterly newsletter, the BC Psychologist, for members and operates a province-wide referral service. The BCPA maintains solid relationships with the government, working with its Ministers to expand the role of psychologists in the Province's health care and contributes to public policy matters.