



Mood Disorders Society of Canada
La Société Pour **Les Troubles de L'Humeur** du Canada



a place of mind



Mental Health Opportunity for Canada

*Canada selected to host
“APEC Digital Hub for Best and Innovative Practices
in Mental Health Partnerships”*

2016 Pre-Budget Submission

by

Phil Upshall, National Executive Director
The Mood Disorders Society of Canada

on behalf of

The Mood Disorders Society of Canada
The University of British Columbia
The University of Alberta
 (“The APEC Digital Hub at UBC”)

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Executive Summary

MDSC is seeking support from the Government of Canada of approx. \$5M (CAD) over the next five years (approx. \$1M in FY2016-17) as the federal contribution to helping establish and operate the project.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum has chosen Canada to become a global centre of excellence in mental healthcare, hosting a new international “Digital Hub” to coordinate and promote advanced research from some of the world’s leading universities and health institutes involved in the diagnosis, treatment and public awareness of mental disorders.

The APEC Hub aligns with the priorities of the Government of Canada: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has committed to making the fight against mental disorders a top priority and has demonstrated his commitment to putting Canada “back” on the world stage.

In November 2015, the APEC foreign and trade ministers unanimously endorsed the creation of the *APEC Digital Hub for Best and Innovative Practices in Mental Health Partnerships* to become a global centre for collaboration in research and best practices for the early intervention, care and recovery from mental disorders.

What was not announced is the new APEC Digital Hub will be hosted by the University of British Columbia supported by the University of Alberta, and will be managed by the Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC). UBC will be responsible for coordinating all Hub activities, communications and collaboration with partner institutions.

The Hub will also serve as the administrative center and secretariat for the implementation of APEC’s plan to promote mental wellness across the Asia Pacific.

The APEC Hub builds on the successful Canadian Depression Research and Intervention Network, (CDRIN) network of seven similar mental health research hubs at universities and institutes across Canada, created largely with funding from the federal government.

The addition of the APEC Hub at UBC will therefore create, supported by the University of Alberta, a permanent and far-reaching collaboration between Canadian mental health researchers across the country and their counterparts in the U.S., China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and more than a dozen other economies of the Asia-Pacific region.

Start-up funding has been provided by a private-sector donation of \$100,000 (USD) with matching contributions from the MDSC and the two Canadian universities.

Canada's leadership in the project will benefit Canadians suffering with mental disorders by guaranteeing access to world-class research from across Canada and the APEC economies, and to the latest breakthroughs in early intervention and treatments.

At the same time, Canada's leading role as the host and a donor country will help ensure the program includes issues of particular relevance to Canada, such as mental wellness among Indigenous Peoples, and will offer Canadian leaders in government, NGOs and industry an opportunity to be at the forefront of an international effort to raise awareness of and deal with mental health issues.

Finally, the close international collaboration around the APEC Digital Hub project will help to strengthen ties between Canada and some of our most important trading partners, including China.

Canada and its APEC partners share a commitment to mental wellness. Rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the Canadian military have doubled over the past decade, and it is also increasingly prevalent among police, firefighters, paramedics and other first responders.

Depression is becoming an epidemic. On average, 11 Canadians a day commit suicide. Among Canadian youth, depression is the second most frequent cause of death. Across the Canadian workforce, it is the single largest cause of long-term disability claims. Depression costs the Canadian economy an estimated \$51 billion a year.

The Hub will be formally launched in Canada (Vancouver and/or Ottawa) in Spring 2016 when APEC representatives meet with their Canadian partners. Under APEC ministerial directive, the Digital Hub will also be showcased at an international summit event in the coming months.

The partners of the APEC Digital Hub anticipate the launch program will include leading national representatives in government, industry and academia from Canada and across the APEC region, and would welcome the leadership of the Prime Minister and his ministers in showcasing this world-class, Canadian led, innovative international collaboration in the fight against mental illness and the promotion of mental wellness for 2.8 BILLION people.

The APEC Digital Hub

Background

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) includes Canada and 20 other economies representing 2.8 billion people and more than half the world's economic activity. In November 2015, the APEC foreign and trade ministers unanimously endorsed the creation of the Digital Hub, and subsequently chose Canada to host it.

The University of British Columbia will host the APEC Hub in collaboration with the University of Alberta. It will be managed by the Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) and supported by CDRIN and the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

In December 2015, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by APEC, the MDSC and the two lead universities to create the *APEC Digital Hub for Best and Innovative Practices in Mental Health Partnerships*.

As of January 2016, six core academic, government and private-sector partners for the Digital Hub are confirmed across the APEC region including Peking University (China), the University of Melbourne (Australia), and as of yet, unannounced partners in Japan and the Philippines. More than a dozen additional organizations have formally expressed interest in partnering with host institution UBC.

The Need

Mental disorders are one of Canada's leading healthcare challenges. Rates of PTSD are soaring in the Canadian military and among first responders. An estimated two-thirds of the Indigenous survivors of residential schools have suffered from PTSD.

The urgent need to address mental wellness is shared among Canada's partners in APEC, underscored in its guiding policy document *APEC Roadmap to Promote Mental Wellness in a Healthy Asia-Pacific*: "Mental health is critical to overall health, social and economic participation, workplace productivity, and sustainable economic growth for the Asia Pacific region. Swift economic changes, aging populations and natural disasters raise challenges for APEC member economies that require a proactive and concerted response..."

The Challenge

Canada and its APEC partners are facing similar obstacles to mental wellness. Family physicians commonly lack the specialized training in the early diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders. About two-thirds of Canadians suffering depression-related illnesses will leave their doctor's office without effective solutions.

The APEC initiative will also address other obstacles such as shortages of specialists, inadequate prevention programs, and limited access to quality care with continuity and effective medications.

Despite the prevalence and severe impact of mental disorders, annual spending worldwide on mental health remains less than two dollars per person.

Mission

In Canada, the creation of a national network of mental health research hubs over the past several years was based on the government and healthcare community recognizing that overcoming obstacles to mental wellness is best achieved through multi-stakeholder collaboration and public-private partnerships.

The APEC Hub program will create a web-based platform to facilitate the exchange of best practice models, assess specific interventions, and inform the launch of new pilot collaborations. All stakeholders across Canada and other APEC member economies – governments, academic institutions, industry practitioners and professional groups – will be encouraged to engage in this exchange.

As a novel, interactive web-based platform, the APEC Hub will be designed to enhance awareness, share information and experiences, develop customized curricula, and facilitate the identification and implementation of best practices. It will also help to address a number of specific collaborative issues, including:

- integration of mental health best practices into primary care;
- implementation strategies for mental wellness in the workplace;
- increased attention to the mental health needs of Indigenous and vulnerable populations; and
- enhanced communication between policy makers and practitioners.

Organization

The Digital Hub will be operated by University of British Columbia, supported by the University of Alberta, and managed by the Mood Disorders Society. In turn, they will develop a network of international partner institutions to provide training and/or expertise that best fits an economy's unique situation. The Hub will be supported by a dedicated Executive Director chosen by the Canadian partners, and reporting to an 11-member Board of Advisors.

What's In It for Canadians?

Canada's leadership in the project will ultimately benefit Canadians suffering with mental disorders by guaranteeing access to the resulting world-class research, best practices and global breakthroughs in early intervention and treatments for sufferers, and assistance to their families and caregivers.

Canada's mental healthcare community will effectively be on the global front lines of an unprecedented international campaign for mental wellness. Through its novel structure and approach, the APEC Hub will serve as a regional incubator of new ideas for collaborative training, education and research. This will significantly extend the reach and potential of the existing Canadian network of seven similar mental health research hubs at universities and institutes across the country.

Canada's leading role as host and a donor country will also help ensure the program includes issues of particular relevance to Canada, such as mental wellness among Indigenous peoples, and offer Canadian leaders in government, NGOs and the healthcare industry an opportunity to be at the forefront of an international campaign to raise awareness of mental health issues.

By creating strong new collaborations between Canada and its APEC partners in the area of mental health, the Hub project has the potential to strengthen Canadian trade and diplomatic relations with China, Japan, South Korea other countries in the Asia-Pacific.

Finally, management of the program by the Mood Disorders Society of Canada, a trusted and experienced Canadian charity, ensures that all public and private investments in the project will be subject to the highest standards of professionalism, transparency and accountability.

Launch

The Hub will be formally launched in Canada (Vancouver and/or Ottawa) in Spring 2016 when APEC representatives meet with their Canadian partners and other stakeholders to begin building the necessary infrastructure, and planning the other initiatives necessary to support the Hub and its collaborating centres. It is hoped a launch program would include leading national representatives in government, industry and academia from Canadian and across the APEC region.

Under APEC ministerial directive, the Digital Hub will also be publicly showcased at a high-level international event. Two possibilities are currently under consideration: the World Health Organization summit meeting "Out of the Shadows: Making Mental Health a Global Development Priority" (April 2016, Washington, D.C.); and the APEC High-Level Ministerial Meeting on Health and the Economy (August 2016, Lima Peru).

The launch will be formally recognized by APEC leaders at their 2016 Summit in November.

Funding

Janssen Asia will provide private sector start-up funding in the amount of \$100,000 (USD) with the three Canadian primary Hub partners – MDSC and the two lead universities – contributing matching funds.

MDSC, on behalf of its Canadian partners, is seeking support from the Government of Canada in the amount of approximately \$5 million (CAD), spread over five years.

The Canadian requirement in FY2016-17 is expected to be approximately one million dollars, in addition to the seed funding already provided by the private sector. Those funds will be used for infrastructure and operations during the year, including:

- Design, construction and testing of a leading-edge web-based platform with the features and security required in a world-class technology;
- design, promotion and hosting of an on-site capacity-building training program for 75-100 leading mental health advocates and experts;
- facilitating at least one training module or webinar on each of the common focus areas identified in APEC’s assessment of strategic needs to overcome the obstacles to mental wellness;
- uploading and showcasing 100 collaborations and public-private partnerships dedicated to greater mental wellness.

APEC has already mandated that all funds to establish and operate the Digital Hub will be received and managed by the Mood Disorders Society of Canada.