

Canadian Psychiatric Association

Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

Until recently, Canada was the only advanced industrial country without a national strategy or plan on mental health. At least one in five Canadians each year will be affected by a mental illness and it is estimated to cost the Canadian economy \$51 billion dollars annually. These costs affect all Canadians as employers, employees or taxpayers. The CPA asks the Federal Government of Canada to implement the Mental Health Commission of Canada Strategy Changing Directions Changing Lives(2012)in Budget 2013. More specifically we ask the Federal Government to: 1)Increase the proportion of health spending that is devoted to mental health from seven to nine per cent over 10 years. 2)Increase the proportion of social spending that is devoted to mental health by two percentage points from current levels. 3)Set up an innovation fund to assist provinces and territories in developing a sustainable mental health infrastructure across Canada. The fund should be proportionate to the burden of illness in Canada. The fund could for example, be used by the provinces to expand the role of primary health care in meeting mental health needs, set standards for wait times for community mental health services for people of all ages and improve access to necessary mental health services. 4)Develop a mental health research agenda for Canada, encompassing psycho-social and clinical research, neuroscience, as well as knowledge from lived experience and diverse cultures. 5)Improve mental health data collection, research, and knowledge exchange across Canada.

_____ 1. The Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2012).Changing Direction Changing Lives, The Mental Health Strategy for Canada. www.mentalhealthcommission.ca 2. The Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2012) Why Investing in Mental Health Will Contribute to Canada’s Economic Prosperity and to the Sustainability of Our Health Care System. <http://strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca/about/case-for-investment/> 3.The Conference Board of Canada. (2012) Mental Health Issues in the Labour Force: Reducing the Economic Impact on Canada. <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/>

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

Better access to mental health services for the elderly is essential to keep them living independent and satisfying lives. The CPA asks the Federal Government of Canada to implement the Mental Health Commission of Canada Strategy Changing Directions Changing Lives(2012)in Budget 2013. More specifically we ask the Federal Government to: 1) Counter the impact of age discrimination on mental health. 2) Help older adults to participate in meaningful activities, sustain relationships and maintain good physical health. 3)Increase the capacity of older adults, their families, and those who work with them to identify mental illnesses, dementia, elder abuse, and risk of suicide, and intervene early when problems first emerge. An additional anticipated impact on working population productivity is expected from people in the labor force who will increasingly need to care for aging parents with dementia.

1. The Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2012).Changing Direction Changing Lives, The Mental Health Strategy for Canada. www.mentalhealthcommission.ca 2. The Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2012) Why Investing in Mental Health Will Contribute to Canada's Economic Prosperity and to the Sustainability of Our Health Care System. <http://strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca/about/case-for-investment/> 3. The Conference Board of Canada. (2012) Mental Health Issues in the Labour Force: Reducing the Economic Impact on Canada. <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/>

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

There is a need for immediate action by governments and businesses to address the lost economic activity stemming from the effects of mental illness in the working-age Canadian population. Creating mentally healthy workplaces in the public service will benefit workers, their families, and employers, while contributing to the economic prosperity of the country. Healthy, working-age people are generally able to apply themselves fully in the workforce. They contribute labour,skills, knowledge, and innovation. But mental illness can diminish the capacity of people to perform at their best. Canada's overall human capital potential is lessened when poor mental health hampers workers from participating fully in the labour market or removes them from it altogether. About 21.4 per cent of the working population currently experience mental health problems and illnesses that potentially affect their work productivity. Adults in their early and prime working years are among the hardest hit by mental health problems and illnesses. Poor mental health can affect work performance in varying ways. Some people are absent from work frequently(absenteeism). Others are present at work, but are not functioning to their full capabilities (presenteeism). Mental health problems and illnesses typically account for approximately 30 per cent of short- and long- term disability claims and are rated one of the top three drivers of both short term and long term disability claims by more than 80 per cent of Canadian employers. In 2010, mental health problems and illnesses were responsible for 47 per cent of all approved disability claims in the federal civil service. Mental health problems and illnesses also account for more than \$6 billion in lost productivity costs due to absenteeism and presenteeism. The CPA asks the Federal Government of Canada to implement the Mental Health Commission of Canada Strategy Changing Directions Changing Lives(2012)in Budget 2013. More specifically we ask the Federal Government to: 1) Implement the Psychological Health and Safety Standard in the public sector. 2) Increase capacity to implement comprehensive approaches to mentally healthy workplaces. 3) Remove

barriers to full participation of people living with mental health problems or illnesses in workplaces. Poor mental health in the Canadian working-age population affects governments in two ways: * through decreased tax revenue from lost labour market participation; and * through demand for increased government spending on services and programs. Treating mental illness requires large investments. Costs include health care services at hospitals, rehabilitation, long-term care, and primary care. Individuals who are unable to work may require both government financial assistance and local community resources.

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5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?

Canadians living with mental illnesses are facing great challenges requiring the Federal government to commit increased spending. More than 6.7 million people in Canada are living with a mental health problem or illness today; that is one in five persons, or about 19.8 per cent of Canada's population in any given year. Yet only 4.8 per cent of total health care spending in Canada goes to mental health. The economic costs of mental health problems and illnesses are very significant. The total cost from mental health problems and illnesses to the Canadian economy is conservatively estimated to be at least \$50 billion per year. The Public Health Agency of Canada recently reported that among the seven major health conditions, mental health problems and illnesses had the highest total direct care costs in Canada and were the third leading contributor to the total annual economic burden of these seven conditions. There are a number of areas where the Federal government has a clear mandate to play a leadership role. As the fifth largest provider of health care in the country, the federal government has the opportunity to lead by example by improving its own capacity to develop mental health policy and deliver services in areas for which it has direct responsibility such as First Nations, Inuit and Metis, National Defence, Veterans Affairs, Refugees, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Corrections. The CPA asks the Federal Government of Canada to implement the Mental Health Commission of Canada Strategy Changing Directions Changing Lives(2012)in Budget 2013. More specifically we ask the Federal Government to:

- 1) Improve collaboration and coordination among all levels of government regarding the mental health of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, as well as other groups for whom the federal government has significant responsibilities for service delivery.
- 2) Improve mental health services and supports by and for immigrants and refugees.
- 3) Reduce the over-representation of people living with mental health problems and illnesses in the criminal justice system, and provide appropriate services, treatment and supports to those who are in the system.

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