



**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**  
*Mental health for all*

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Leaders Not “Walking the Talk” on Workplace Mental Health, National Survey Reveals**

*Survey shows majority of leaders fail to follow  
words with action on improving conditions at work*

**Vancouver** – The Canadian workplace has a long way to go before it can be called mentally healthy.

Fewer than one in four organizations are doing “quite” or “very” well in addressing workplace mental health; 32 per cent are doing “somewhat” well, while 42 per cent aren’t doing well at all, according to a national recent survey of 597 respondents from across the workplace spectrum and every province and territory except Nunavut, taken by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA).

When it comes to the voluntary National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, launched with much fanfare in Canada three years ago, only 17 per cent of those surveyed indicate their workplaces are in some stage of implementing the standard – seven per cent are just starting; seven per cent are on their way, and only three per cent have fully implemented.

A majority of those surveyed, 54 per cent, are not familiar with the standard.

At least part of the problem is leadership as 52 per cent of respondents feel leadership does not “walk the talk”. Another 36 per cent cite difficulties sustaining leadership commitment and equally 36 per cent point to a lack of senior leadership buy-in.

The complete survey will be unveiled at the CMHA’s 13th annual national Bottom Line Conference on Workplace Mental Health, to be held February 23 and 24 at the Marriot Pinnacle Downtown Hotel in Vancouver.

Project leaders Sarika Gundu, National Director, Workplace Mental Health Program, CMHA National and Julia Kaisla, Community Relations Director of CMHA BC, will lead the presentation.

“What’s most important is how workers – including leadership – feel their organization is addressing workplace mental health, whether their organization is considering the structures that create or interfere with psychological health and safety, and if they feel the supports exist for them to access help early,” said Julia Kaisla.

“The National Standard is one tool to help them get there, but it might not be the first tool organizations are reaching for. The survey also indicates that face-to-face contact with an expert, such as a workshop, is one of the tools they have found most effective,” she said.

Added Sarika Gundu: “We need to act now. There is way too much writing on the wall to ignore workplace mental health.”

The CMHA survey results are quite similar to a workplace mental health survey conducted by the Conference Board of Canada and released February 16. According to that survey, only 39 per cent of Canada’s employers have a mental health strategy in place. A large number, 31 per cent, don’t believe that mental health is an issue in their workplace.

In the face of this daunting challenge, the theme of this year's Bottom Line Conference offers a ray of hope. Heroes in the Workplace: Stories from the Champions of Change, highlights the individuals who are working to improve workplace mental health, despite the obstacles.

Download **Workplace Mental Health in Canada: Findings from a Pan-Canadian Survey** at [www.bottomlineconference.ca/resources](http://www.bottomlineconference.ca/resources).

For more information on the speakers highlighted here and the conference program, please see [www.bottomlineconference.ca](http://www.bottomlineconference.ca) or contact Paul Sullivan at 604-685-4742 or [p.sullivan@breakthroughpr.com](mailto:p.sullivan@breakthroughpr.com).

Media are invited to attend this year's conference and there will be a media table on site. If possible, please register in advance by contacting Jennifer Quan at 604-688-3234 or [jennifer.quan@cmha.bc.ca](mailto:jennifer.quan@cmha.bc.ca).

**About the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA):**

CMHA is Canada's most established mental health charity and the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health. CMHA helps people access the resources they need to maintain and improve mental health, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness. Each year in BC alone, CMHA serves more than 100,000 people all across the province. For mental health and addiction information and resources visit [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca).