



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

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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# **UBC Wins Mental Health in the Workplace Award**

*CMHA recognizes UBC's inspirational leadership, innovation and excellence in maintaining and improving mental health in the workplace*

**Vancouver** – Obscured by recent high-profile troubles at the University of British Columbia is the great work being done by the university in the realm of workplace mental health.

That work has now been recognized by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), which today gave UBC its annual Clarence M. Hincks award for its inspirational leadership, innovation and excellence in maintaining and improving mental health for all.

Clarence Hincks was one of the founders of the 98-year-old CMHA, in his time an agent of change, and UBC impressed the award committee with its game-changing mental health programs.

UBC provides a number of mental health initiatives for students, staff, and faculty, including Thrive Week, which encourages mental well-being through dialogue, awareness, healthy choices, social support and normalizing mental health challenges.

Last year, Thrive reached more than 35,000 faculty, staff and students. Reception has been exceptional, as 66 per cent of faculty and staff believe that Thrive promotes a positive campus environment and 73 per cent feel that they have a better understanding of positive mental health as a result of participating in the program. Perhaps most telling, in 2015 10 universities followed UBC's lead and held Thrive events of their own.

"The WOW factor for us was Thrive Week," said Sarika Gundu, National Director of CMHA's Workplace Mental Health Program. "This one mental health initiative created a chain reaction of positive change, impacting thousands of lives. If one university can do this imagine what one more workplace can do."

This year's Hincks award was given to UBC by the CMHA's Sarika Gundu and a representative of last year's award winner, Lyne Wilson, Director of HR and Employee Relations at NAV Canada, the national air traffic control organization. Accepting the award were health and wellbeing coordinators Tracey Hawthorn and Miranda Massie of UBC.

"We recognize that with all the controversy surrounding the resignation of the university president that it's been a tough year for UBC," said Tracey Hawthorn. "Maintaining a focus on positive mental health will help us cope with adverse circumstances. And the school is committed to mental health – and in the search for a new president, we're looking for someone who shares that commitment."

The award was given at the sold-out Bottom Line Conference, CMHA's annual national workplace mental health conference, held today and tomorrow at the Marriott Pinnacle Downtown Hotel in Vancouver.

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 the rest of the conference program. 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), or see her at the conference registration desk.

**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).