



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

BC Division  
905 - 1130 W. Pender St., Vancouver, V6E 4A4  
Tel: (604) 688-3234 or 1-800-555-8222  
Fax: (604) 688-3236  
www.cmha.bc.ca

## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: February 20, 2017

# BC GOVERNMENT UNVEILS \$140 MILLION OF INVESTMENTS FOR TARGET MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

***Targeted investments an important opportunity to act #b4stage4 to prevent and intervene early with mental health and substance use problems***

**Victoria, BC - (February 20, 2017)** – Research shows that almost 70% of BC children and youth living with mental health problems do not receive the treatment they need. Five of the most common mental health problems among children and youth – anxiety disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, substance use misuse, conduct disorder, and depression – are also preventable. Today, the province has announced a package of measures to respond to this treatment gap, improving child and youth mental health in BC schools, homes, and communities. This follows Friday’s announcement that the BC Government has signed on to the federal Health Accord, securing \$655 million dollars for mental health and addictions care over the next ten years.

“Today’s announcement is an important milestone in our progress to make sure mental health and addictions are government priorities,” says CMHA BC CEO Bev Gutray. “We recognize this is a significant investment in the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Canadian Mental Health Association in BC, FamilySmart (formerly the FORCE), Foundry, and other allied partners to continue making a real difference in the mental health of children, youth, and families where they live, learn, and play across the province. These kinds of services and supports help more young people have a fair chance at life’s opportunities.”

Over 2000 people and six organizations from across BC have signed on to the #b4stage4 manifesto, released by CMHA BC in October 2016. Today’s announcement aligns with the manifesto’s recommendations to ensure mental health and addictions care are on more equal footing with physical health care with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention:

1. *Lets’ focus investments in the prevention of mental health and addiction problems and early intervention when symptoms first arise:* More families will now benefit from Confident Parents: Thriving Kids, a parent training program delivered by phone. More people can “ask once – and get help fast.”
2. *Let’s build an accessible, publicly funded addictions treatment system* – 28 new highly specialized treatment beds are an important step in the right direction. Further, the announced \$65 million to house adult living with mental health and substance use problems is a critical intervention and reflects a core service operated by CMHA branches across the province. We need to keep building a standardized, compassionate, evidence-based system of care for all battling substance use problems.
3. *Let’s strengthen recovery closer to home in community* – Foundry is an excellent example of community-centred, integrated, youth-friendly mental health and substance use care. CMHA Kelowna operates a Foundry centre. Ensuring better access for young people, in their community, is integral to recovery and improved mental health and wellbeing.

4. *Let's improve crisis care* – Increasing the number of community mental health and substance use clinicians to 120 at the Ministry of Children and Family Development is another important step to reduce the 70% treatment gap for children and youth. Further, effective and early care for depression is a critical ingredient in our efforts to prevent suicide. Young people (15+) with early symptoms of low mood, stress, or anxiety can now access Bounce Back, a coaching service using cognitive behavioural therapy.
5. *Let's lead change in mental health and addictions* – building a #b4stage4 system for mental health and addictions in our province takes leadership, planning, and a map forward. Today is an important milestone for the path ahead in getting closer to mental health for *all* British Columbians. CMHA BC applauds the leadership of each the Ministries identified in today's announcement.

To learn more about CMHA BC's b4stage4 campaign, please visit [www.b4stage4.ca](http://www.b4stage4.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.bc.ca](http://www.cmha.bc.ca)

**Media Contact:**

Lorna Allen

Communications Coordinator – Media, CMHA BC Division

P: 604-688-3234 ext. 6326

E: [lorna.allen@cmha.bc.ca](mailto:lorna.allen@cmha.bc.ca)