

February 6, 2013

The Honourable Robert Douglas Nicholson  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada  
284 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H8

Dear Minister Nicholson:

Mental health organizations in Canada are comprised of some of the most dedicated supporters and advocates in the country. We seek to improve the mental health system and the lives of the many Canadians who struggle with mental illnesses, and their families. While we often support one another on common goals, there are a few occasions where building a working alliance is necessary to strengthen our voice on particular issues of vital importance to the mental health community.

We are writing to you today, as one voice, on such a critical matter. We are proud of the progress your government has made to date with enhancing public understanding of mental health and mental illness and improving Canada's mental health system. With the creation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the country having its first Mental Health Strategy, reducing stigma, sharing resources, and improving the mental health system have become possible.

With this in mind, we recognize that your government's review of the mental disorder provisions of the Criminal Code with respect to the dispositions of persons found Not Criminally Responsible on account of Mental Disorder (NCRMD) is important to many Canadians. We recognize that the public has legitimate reasons to be concerned about safety and our hearts go out to all victims and family members who are or have been affected by any type of violent crime.

We believe that lack of understanding and misinformation is often the basis of the public's fear of those Canadians living with a mental disorder. Effective public policy can only be successful if it is evidence based. This is where we have come together to assist you and your Ministry. We strongly believe we have the knowledge, resources, and tools that will allow you to move forward with NCRMD changes that will take into account the need to protect the public from dangerous persons while addressing the therapeutic needs of these mentally disordered offenders so as to mitigate risk and promote recovery. In fact, these two issues go hand-in-hand.

As a group, we would like to lend our collective expertise in effecting change to the NCRMD legislation to better meet the needs of all involved (victims, families, the public and those persons carrying the burden of mental disorder). We would like to begin working together immediately with you and your Ministry and are requesting a meeting with you at your earliest opportunity. We believe that by working together we can bring about positive changes which will benefit all Canadians.

We can be contacted through our alliance facilitator, Chris Summerville, CEO of the Schizophrenia Society of Canada at 1-204-786-1616 or [chris@schizophrenia.ca](mailto:chris@schizophrenia.ca).

Sincerely,

*Wane Lallan*



**Mood Disorders Society of Canada**

Société pour **les troubles de l'humeur** du Canada

*Jean Beckett*



*Peter Colledge*



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

**Association canadienne pour la santé mentale**  
*La santé mentale pour tous*

*CSF*



**A REASON TO HOPE. THE MEANS TO COPE.**  
**SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF CANADA**  
**SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE LA SCHIZOPHRÉNIE**  
**UNE SOURCE D'ESPOIR, DE SOUTIEN ET D'ENTRAIDE.**

(representing all Schizophrenia Societies across Canada)

*Catherine Zah*

**camh**

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health  
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale

*Shanaud*

**Canadian Psychiatric Association**



**Association des psychiatres du Canada**

*Karen Cohen*

**CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION**



**SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE PSYCHOLOGIE**



**CASP/ACPS**

Canadian Association For Suicide Prevention  
Association canadienne pour la prévention du suicide