



CANADIAN MENTAL
HEALTH ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
POUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE

Annual Report 2006-2007

Newfoundland and Labrador Division

There is no health...



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...without mental health!

Current Staff:



Bottom Left to Right: Geri Oliver (Office Manager) Heather Pollett (Policy Analyst), Top: Geoff Chaulk (Executive Director), Bev Hiscock (Events Manager), Roger Baggs (Work Place Mental Health Coordinator)

CMHA-NL President's Report, 2006/07

This past year has been a time of transformation and exciting developments for the CMHA Board of Directors in Newfoundland and Labrador! I extend heartfelt thanks and appreciation to a dedicated Board of Directors; competent and caring staff, and loyal volunteers, donors and sponsors for bringing us through what has been, for CMHA-NL, a year of change, development and re-asserting

our place on the landscape of mental health supports and services in the province.

During the year, we streamlined our organization by establishing one Board and management structure for programs, services and fundraising. With Directors from across the island of Newfoundland as well as from Labrador, we can now say with confidence that we

are truly a provincial board! We look forward to being able to establish more of a presence in varied and remote parts of the province.

We divested from CHANNAL, the consumer self-help program that had been incubated by CMHA-NL. We applaud the founding principles of CHANNAL, and we wish the group continued success in the future. In partnership with the College of the North Atlantic, we launched our new mental illness education program, Changing Minds. We appreciate the role CNA plays in facilitating delivery of this excellent training program, and enabling access to the program from virtually anywhere in the province. We continue to lobby for increased uptake from front-line workers in a variety of settings.

Most charitable organizations will admit to a degree of uncertainty when it comes to financial sustainability, and for us, 2006/07 was a particularly anxious one. However, with the creative management and tenacious approach of a truly remarkable Executive Director,

and the unfailing support of a group of government and non-government lobbyists, this too passed! At the moment we benefit from firmer financial footing, and we have reason to be optimistic about long-term sustainability of the organization.

At the AGM today, we will be presenting members with a revised set of bylaws for CMHA-NL. We encourage your critical review and constructive feedback on this important document, as it is the guideline by which we operate as the voice of mental health and mental illness in the province.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank our staff for always, always going above and beyond any reasonable expectation we place on them. We recognize your efforts and applaud your dedication. Thank you as well to the Department of Health and Community Services, to our partners, corporate sponsors, monthly donors, and all who support in any way the work of CHMA in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Sincere regards,
Nadia Power

CMHA-NL Executive Director's Report, 2007

The year 2006/07 was a year of significant change and development for the Newfoundland and Labrador Division of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Organizational Structure

Following the departure of the Director of Fund Development and an internal review of efficiency and effectiveness, direction was given to dissolve the fund-raising Foundation that supported the work of the Division for over 10 years. This process was relatively painless for

the organization due to good legal advice, thanks to the pro bono consultation provided by Greg Smith and colleagues regarding the dissolution process; an ever-helpful Charities Consultant, Zachary Euler of the Canada Revenue Agency; and staff of the province's Government Services. The Foundation was dissolved on October 11, 2006.

With the dissolution of the Foundation I assumed senior management responsibility for fund-raising activity. Further re-structuring of the organization

brought about the introduction of the position of Policy Analyst to support the Division in its ongoing policy analysis and development work, and the position of Events Manager was developed to support our various fund-raising events. The positions of IT Coordinator, Receptionist, and Fund Development Coordinator were eliminated. The new position of Office Manager was also established and assumed by Geri Oliver. As with many re-organizations, these changes took place over a period of months with final implementation occurring in the new fiscal year.

CHANNAL Divestment

As an outcome of a strategic planning session facilitated by the late Rick Morris that was held in the summer of '04 with CHANNAL members from across the province, and after almost two years of preparation and planning, the Division divested CHANNAL in June 2006.

Divestment processes can sometimes be bumpy and we hit a few of those bumps throughout this process. However, the divestment was long overdue and now allows CHANNAL its own voice in the community mental health system. CHANNAL is wished every success in the future.

Public Education

Public Education continues to be the main thrust of our work. This year saw the realization of our much-anticipated Changing Minds program. Changing

Minds is a stellar mental illness education program for first line responders in a variety of settings, including, most importantly, the police.

The program was launched in May 2006

with great fanfare at the College of the North Atlantic. With over 200 guests in attendance, including consumers who appear in the program, family members, service providers and government officials, the launch of the program was widely covered by print, radio and television media.

The success we have achieved in implementing Changing Minds is due, in no small part, to our partnership with the College. It is with the commitment of people like Blake Cryderman, Joanne O'Leary and Clara McCue that we have trained 18 trainers who are located in all health regions across the province, and have trained or have registered for training over 350 service providers. An advisory committee made up of CNA and CMHA-NL staff oversees the ongoing management of the implementation of Changing Minds.

Thanks to the vision and support of Chief Joe Browne of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, CMHA-NL has an agreement that all new recruits to the RNC will receive the 2 days of Changing Minds training. All recent recruits going back to 2005 have now been trained.

Changing Minds has also been invaluable in lectures that I regularly give to Memorial students in different disciplines. The powerful messages of consumers and family members truly elucidate the experience of mental illness and recovery.

In the summer of '06, we welcomed three cyclists calling themselves Riders Into Light who had cycled across the county to raise awareness of and to combat the stigma that surrounds those of us who live with mental illness. These were three rather humble men who were exceedingly grateful for a rather modest luncheon we hosted for them. The

Telegram also published a piece that I wrote about the cyclists and the problem of social stigma and mental illness. Thank you Jan, Charlie, Gerry and Ernie (their driver who was 80 years of age!)

During that same summer we also had the good fortune of hiring a MUN graduate, Dave Whalen. Dave did a number of research papers for the Division on seasonal affective disorder, stigma, and seniors and aging. The latter was of particular interest to me given the demographics of the province and the embarrassing fact that the Division was not up to speed on the mental health needs of this group of citizens. Dave's literature review led to assigning two social work students on placement with CMHA-NL to further explore the topic and subsequently conduct over 40 field interviews with service providers. The students found what the literature indicated – that front-line staff in long-term care facilities and community care homes need education on the signs, symptoms and treatment of depression among the elderly.

A subsequent round-table of local experts hosted by CMHA-NL verified the above and led to proposals for funding being submitted to the health Boards and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Also, in the summer of '06, CMHA-NL broached new ground by beginning our exploration of issues related to immigrant mental health. I was approached by Dr. Sylvia Reitmanova to explore this issue and to hear about the research she was conducting on the topic. We held a lunchtime seminar where Sylvia presented her research finding to representatives of the provincial government, Eastern Health, and the Association for New Canadians.

In the fall of '06' two nursing students on

a work placement, Jessica Drover and Tim McAlister, followed up this issue by looking at related research, interviewing people in this field, and then producing an information brochure entitled "Mental Wellness for New Canadians".

Advocacy

Advocacy remains an area of focus and action for the Division. Often advocacy takes place within the context of public education and it was within this very context that I asked to tour the Waterford Hospital.

The tour was requested after I had personally received a complaint regarding conditions at the Waterford. The details of that complaint were accurate and the findings of my tour warranted bringing these into the public spotlight. You probably know the rest. It is worthy to note that the unit I described as most deplorable in terms of its physical state is funded for renovation under the last provincial budget.

Also during 06/07, I had the privilege of being involved in the policy discussions related to the development of the new Mental Health Care and Treatment Act. Those discussions and our advocacy led to ensuring the evaluation of the new Act, and the recognition of supports and services and two determinants of health, housing and income, being enshrined in legislation.

Policy

Heather Pollett, our new Policy Analyst, and I are also leading the work on Mental Health Promotion on behalf of the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council. The working group assigned this task is made up of representatives from different organizations including Eastern Health, NL Teacher's Association, the provincial government,

and the Association of Registered Nurses in NL.

We are working toward recommendations to Council and then to the Minister of Health and Community Services in the fall of '07. These recommendations will relate to strategies to promote the mental health of our citizens across the lifespan.

Community

We continue our involvement in community-based initiatives in traditional and not so traditional ways. The Division, through our former Education Coordinator Susan Ball, has been represented on the Mental Health Committee of the local Wellness initiative, and Susan participated in the Community Partnerships project exploring employment services and needs for people with mental illness through Stella Burry Community Services.

I have also provided education sessions to staff and volunteers of Turnings. Using our Changing Minds program we have talked about the realities of drug addiction and mental illness.

Heather Pollett and I have been involved in exciting new projects

launched by the Community Services Council, including the Vibrant Communities initiative to reduce poverty, and an effort to involve young adults in the voluntary sector.

A local media that has been receptive and responsive to issues that are important to us has enhanced the public education and advocacy work of CMHA-NL. The Telegram has printed a number of articles I have contributed on key mental health issues, as well as one written by Heather. CBC Radio has offered us time on such issues as the new Mental Health Care and Treatment Act, the Waterford tour, and a full hour on Radio Noon with my colleague, Dr. Ted Callanan, during Mental illness Awareness week. Their support is appreciated.

In closing, on behalf of the staff of CMHA-NL, I extend a thank-you to our many supporters across the province, our monthly donors, and the Board of Directors. Without you, we would not be able to do what we do.

**Respectfully submitted,
Geoff Chaulk, MSW, RSW
Executive Director**

Staff (For Reporting Year 2006-2007)

Executive Director	Geoff Chaulk
Education Coordinator	Susan Ball
Development Coordinator	Sharon Muise
Administrative Assistant	Geri Oliver
Policy Analyst	Heather Pollett

Please visit our website at www.cmhanl.ca

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