

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Friday December 19, 2008**

Given recent events in our mental health care system, the Newfoundland and Labrador division of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA-NL) is concerned about the status of mental health services for children, youth and their families in our province, and the growing public discourse on the related issues.

CMHA has learned that there were/are over 50 children and youth, many from Labrador, outside our province for treatment of emotional, psychological, behavioral and addiction problems. This poses a concern about what is needed locally, regionally and on a provincial level for the children and youth of our province.

As noted in the 2006 Senate Report on mental illness and addiction in our country, entitled *Out of the Shadows at Last*, “service fragmentation, underfunding, a shortage of mental health professionals and a failure to involve young people and their families in long-term treatment solutions, has resulted in the delayed application of treatment interventions”. The report indicates a need for investment in early intervention and prevention for child and youth mental-health services.

The NL division of the CMHA is calling for a round-table of experts representing all areas of the province and people affected by the current state of mental health service provision in our province, and requests that Eastern Health launch an immediate operational review of the province’s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. CMHA-NL is willing to assist in the facilitation of the round-table discussion, which is most appropriately hosted by the Department of Health and Community Services, and is willing to assist Eastern Health with the operational review.

The NL division of the CMHA believes that we can find our own answers to service provision issues in order to better serve our children, youth and families who are struggling with the impact of mental illness. We need to work together.

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