

# Reference and Counsel – Motion 1.5

## MOTION 1.5

**RELATING TO:** Closing the funding gap between physical health and mental health/addictions funding in Canada.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Director of Public Policy and Service Ministries, Eastern Synod, ELCIC

### PREAMBLE:

Mental health and addictions have a personal and a social impact on us all. Statistics taken from the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health indicate that

- in any given year, 1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health illness or addiction problem
- People who have a mental illness are twice as likely to have a substance use problem compared to the general population
- Among Ontarians aged 25-34, 1 out of every 8 deaths is related to opioid use
- After accidents, suicide is the second leading cause of death for people aged 15-24
- First Nations youth die by suicide about 5 to 6 times more often than non-Indigenous youth
- Suicide rates for Inuit youth are among the highest in the world - 11 times the national average
- Mental illness is a leading cause of disability in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

Previously, Canada's funding levels for mental health and addictions ranked near the bottom among a list of 37 OECD (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development) countries.<sup>2</sup> Currently, in budget 2017, under the Canada Health Transfer, \$37.1 billion goes to the provinces and territories with the federal government committing to \$11 billion over the next 10 years in new targeted funding for provinces and territories to improve access to home care and mental health services for Canadians.<sup>3</sup> This will include \$6 billion over 10 years for home care, \$5 billion over ten years for mental health initiatives, and \$65 million over the next five years for the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy to implement its Opioid Action Plan.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Patrick Smith, national CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), states "this is the first time we have seen targeted mental health funding of this magnitude. The

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<sup>1</sup> [www.camh.ca](http://www.camh.ca)

<sup>2</sup> Globe and Mail, August 28, 2016, Keith Doucette

<sup>3</sup> [www.budget.gc.ca](http://www.budget.gc.ca)

<sup>4</sup> [www.budget.gc.ca](http://www.budget.gc.ca)

underfunding cannot be fixed overnight, but this is a significant leap forward in transforming Canada's universal medical care system into a truly universal health care system."<sup>5</sup> While the increased targeted funds and bi-lateral agreements between the federal and provincial and territorial governments are to be lauded and encouraged, mental health and addictions are still not viewed or funded on the same level as physical health in Canada.

**MOTION:**

Recognizing that the federal government has increased its funding and set targeted amounts for mental health and addictions within the Canada Health Transfer, we call on all governments within our jurisdiction to continue to push to erase the difference in funding between physical health and mental health spending, ensuring community-based settings and an evidence-based approach to mental health and addictions. Advocacy continues to be necessary and ongoing by:

1. praying for those who suffer with mental health issues and addictions,
2. learning as ministry areas, congregations and individual members about mental health and addictions, including, but not limited to, training and obtaining naloxone kits for emergency congregational use,
3. understanding Bill C-37 (An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and to make related amendments to other Acts) and supporting safe injection sites where identified and needed in our neighbourhoods, recognizing that patient, staff and people's safety is required,
4. And, asking the Bishop of the Eastern Synod to write to Prime Minister Trudeau and the Minister of Health, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, thanking them in their efforts thus far and urging them to continue to erase the difference between physical health funding and mental health funding.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adoption

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<sup>5</sup> [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)