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The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau,
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

I am writing on behalf of the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada concerning a motion which was adopted by delegates at our Assembly this past year. The motion (ES 18-12 MSC) called on "closing the funding gap between physical health and mental health and addictions funding in Canada."

Mental health and addictions, especially the tragedies and deaths from the opioid addiction crisis across this country, have a personal and a social impact on all of us as Canadians. The Centre for Addictions and Mental Health gives some shocking statistics:

- 1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health illness or addiction problem in any given year
- Indigenous youth die by suicide 5 or 6 times more often than non-Indigenous youth
- Inuit youth suicide rates are the highest in the world - 11 times the national average

I gratefully acknowledge that in the federal budget of 2017, under the Canada Health Transfer of \$37.1 billion to the provinces and territories, that over the next five years \$65 million is targeted specifically for the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy to implement its Opioid Action Plan; that \$5 billion is targeted over the next ten years for mental health initiatives. These are steps in the right direction.

On behalf of the Eastern Synod, I continue to encourage you and urge your government to close the gap in funding between physical health and mental health across this country.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Michael J. Pryse, Bishop
Eastern Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
MJP:sc

cc : The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health
The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance