



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

Dual Diagnosis Program

## UPDATE FROM THE NATIONAL COALITION ON DUAL DIAGNOSIS

December, 2008.



Developmental Disabilities Section of the  
Canadian Psychiatric Association



NADD Ontario

As 2008 draws to a close and with the formal launch of the coalition just 6 weeks ago – there is a lot to update on! Best wishes to you all for the holiday season and New Year!

## **1. Website launch of the Advocacy Toolkit**

The toolkit is now available at [www.care-id.com](http://www.care-id.com), the Canadian Association for Research and Education in Intellectual Disabilities web site. Click on the Dual Diagnosis page in the left hand column and you can access the Position Statement, Fact sheet, FAQ, Stories, Glossary, Media Release, Backgrounder, and Plain Language pamphlet information – all for you to use in your local efforts.

## **2. The Coalition begins conversations with the Commission**

On December 5, Susan Morris presented the Coalition's recommendations to the Mental Health Commission (MHCC) Service System Advisory Committee. The role of this committee is to provide advice to the MHCC on the ingredients necessary to create high performing mental health systems. Dual diagnosis represents as much a system design issue as it does a specific mental health need. Therefore it was appropriate for this committee to discuss how a national strategy for mental health would address the needs of those with complex co-occurring difficulties.

There was a very lively discussion among committee members, who include representatives from across Canada of families, consumers and professionals. Of note in the discussion was the under diagnosis of FASD and the differences regarding how the needs of this population are addressed within in each provincial jurisdiction. However there was a clear consensus that individuals with a dual diagnosis or others with complex difficulties need the system to work better for them.

Resulting from this meeting the chair of the Systems Committee will bring forward the information from the Coalition to the Commission Committee chairs with the recommendation that the issue be discussed in the other committees. Once this occurs the Coalition on Dual Diagnosis will follow up.

As part of their ongoing work the Systems Committee will include in their deliberations how a system can be designed to address those with complex needs.

A copy of the slide presentation will be available on the CARE-ID website shortly.

### 3. Initiation of the Commission Homelessness Projects

The Project Site Coordinators and distinct focus of each project have been determined. They are:

**Vancouver** – mentally ill who struggle with substance and addictions. Catharine Hume ([chume@vancouverfoundation.ca](mailto:chume@vancouverfoundation.ca)), 604-688-2204

**Winnipeg** – urban aboriginal population. Marcia Thomson (Marcia.Thomson2@gov.mb.ca) 204-945-4895

**Toronto** – ethno-cultural diversity including new immigrants who are non-English speaking. Brenda Elias (Brenda50@rogers.com) 647-214-0048

**Moncton** – one of Canada's fastest growing cities, with shortage of services for Anglo and French mentally ill. Claudette Bradshaw (dwbrad@hotmail.com) 506-576-8359 Mobile 506-866-3541

**Montreal** – different services provided to homeless in Quebec. May also look at French speaking immigrants from Africa, Vietnam and Caribbean. (Coordinator to be announced)

Each locale is developing a structure (e.g. advisory groups) for how this multi-site research demonstration project will proceed – based on the particular populations of interest. Dual Diagnosis is not an exclusionary criteria, however there are very specific criteria related to the definition of homelessness and serious mental disorder (diagnosis, duration and disability). The goal is to provide policy relevant evidence about what service and system interventions best achieve housing stability and improved health and well-being.

The research design is intended to evaluate different models of care including *Pathways* against usual care and *Streets to Homes* against usual care. Currently, each community is working with the Project Coordinators to prepare a Request for Application by a consortium with lead research and service applicants, to be submitted by January 23, 2009. Demonstration projects are to begin April 1 2009.

For more information go to [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca) and click on Initiatives and Projects – Homelessness.

To learn about your local project and the potential role of services to meet the needs of individuals with a dual diagnosis, contact your local Project Site Coordinator for how you can become involved.

#### **4. Mental Health Commission seeks youth volunteers**

Volunteers between the ages of 17 and 25 who have had life experience with mental illness are being sought to form an ongoing group to advise the Commission in matters related to youth and mental health. Members may be asked to join project teams, working groups and other committees to provide youth representation. An honorarium will be provided. Please see the call for youth volunteers at [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca). The application deadline is January 12, 2009.

#### **5. Mental Health Commission announces new charity**

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) has announced a new charity, entitled Mental Health Partnerships of Canada, to raise funds for mental health research and demonstration projects. The charity is a joint venture with the Canadian Psychiatric Research Foundation (CPRF), which will provide the administrative infrastructure to issue tax receipts for donations and manage the process for vetting and funding research proposals.

MHCC president Michael Howlett is also president of the new charity, while the board of directors includes several members from both founding organizations. The new board is chaired by Michael Kirby, who also heads the commission. Kirby hopes to create "a national army of volunteers" to help raise funds for the new charity. His target is to build an organization that operates on the same scale as those that raise funds for breast cancer or heart and stroke. See the MHCC press release "New Canadian Mental Health Charity Announced," November 25, 2008, at [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca).