

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION (CMHA), ONTARIO PARTNERS WITH HEALTHY INTERACTIONS TO PROMOTE BETTER MENTAL HEALTH ACROSS CANADA

Toronto, January 15, 2008 – Today, two health leaders announced a five-year partnership intended to promote mental health and support the recovery of those living with mental illnesses through education. CMHA, Ontario is partnering with patient education innovator Healthy Interactions to create new tools and programs to help change the way Canadians perceive, live with, and care for individuals affected by mental illness.

The partnership will include the development and distribution of Healthy Interactions Conversation Map® tools which will help Canadian mental health consumers increase their general life skills and also better enable professionals to care for individuals who are living with mental illnesses.

The Conversation Map approach uses the power of small group dialogue and collaborative learning to improve health. Through this method, groups of patients engage in a discussion about a disease or subject, recognize how their beliefs or attitudes affect their perceptions, and discover ways they can change behavior and improve their personal health management. This innovative and interactive style of learning is the exact opposite of a healthcare professional speaking with the patient in a didactic way, which is so commonplace in much of health education today. Healthy Interactions Conversation Map tools were first introduced to Canadians living with diabetes in 2005, and it is now becoming the standard of education for diabetes in Canada.

“Mental illness is one of the most complex and costliest illnesses from both a personal and societal perspective and we need to respond to it with tools and programs that we are confident will really make a difference,” says Lorne Zon, CEO, CMHA, Ontario. “We’ve seen the success that Healthy Interactions is having improving the quality of life for patients living with other chronic diseases and we are really excited by this innovative new program. We know that Healthy Interactions is the right partner for us.”

Over 20 percent of all Canadians will experience a mental illness during their lifetime. Conservative estimates suggest that the total economic burden of mental health is over \$30-billion dollars annually.

The program will be developed under the auspices of CMHA, Ontario, and will be introduced across Canada in 2009.

About Healthy Interactions Inc.

A global leader in health education, Healthy Interactions is devoted to driving Personal Health Engagement -- our term for helping individuals commit to healthier actions. We create "Aha!" moments that inspire people to change personal health behaviors. Healthy Interactions builds partnerships with leading medical and disease associations, not-for-profit organizations, corporations, and caring healthcare professionals trained in our approaches, enabling millions of people to take control of their health and live their best lives. Founded in 2003, Healthy Interactions is headquartered in Chicago. For more information, visit <http://www.healthyinteractions.com>.

About CMHA, Ontario

Founded in 1952, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario, is a non-profit, charitable organization committed to improving the lives of people with mental illness and their families, and to the promotion of mental health for all Ontarians. CMHA, Ontario achieves its mission through public education, applied research and policy analysis, and advocating for healthy public policy and an effective and efficient health system. Ontario's 32 local CMHA branches provide direct services and supports to communities across the province. More information about CMHA, Ontario may be found on our website at www.ontario.cmha.ca.

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