



For immediate release

## **Mental Health Review Response**

February 22, 2016

Calgary, AB – Today the Alberta government released the Mental Health Review report, which includes the **mandate to restore Alberta’s leadership in suicide prevention**. Mara Grunau, Executive Director of the [Centre for Suicide Prevention](#), is pleased to see suicide prevention prioritized. The Report urges us to reclaim our role as frontrunners in suicide prevention with leadership from the Government of Alberta collaborating “with Alberta Health Services, the Centre for Suicide Prevention and... the Canadian Mental Health Association” (p. 31).

Grunau also applauds the government for the prompt release of the Mental Health Review report. “I commend the Notley Government for its bold leadership in mental health, commissioning the Review and tabling the Report within their first year in office,” says Grunau. She hopes that the implementation plan will be just as timely.

Each year more Albertans die by suicide than in traffic fatalities. Alberta has the 2nd highest suicide rate among the provinces and the rate is climbing. In the 1980s, Alberta was a national leader in suicide prevention, and the report acknowledges this (p. 31). But a decline in investment over the years has robbed us of this position and has robbed thousands of Albertans of their loved ones. In identifying suicide prevention as a priority, *Valuing Mental Health, Report of the Alberta Mental Health Review Committee* calls for sustained “funding and leadership through mandating the Addiction and Mental Health Implementation Team to coordinate activities and interventions across Alberta to support individuals, families and communities in addressing this issue (suicide)” (p. 31).

The Centre for Suicide Prevention is ready for this collaborative work. It is poised to be an active part of the implementation plan. As a branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Centre for Suicide Prevention has been working in the community for more than 30 years, educating caregivers with the knowledge and skills to respond to people at risk of suicide. Education is a best-practice in suicide prevention: we must all learn to identify people at risk and develop the skills to respond. Suicide prevention is everyone’s responsibility.

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