

## MEDIA NOTICE

### Unique conference focuses on depression in adults

**(October 13, 2008, CALGARY, AB)** – Media are invited to attend a unique conference highlighting the latest information on **depression in adults** including its causes, most effective treatments, and benefits to individuals and society. The conference begins at The Westin in downtown Calgary on **Wednesday, October 15 and runs until Friday, October 17.**

The **Consensus Development Conference on Depression in Adults: How to Improve Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment** is set up much like a court hearing. At its conclusion a distinguished jury who has heard evidence from experts over two days generates a consensus statement or “verdict” that is then widely disseminated across the Canadian health-care system to be considered in health policy and practice.

Conference presentations will include:

- How negative experiences in childhood affect adult emotional health
- Alternative treatments such as healing practices in the Aboriginal community
- Workplace issues
- Overcoming stigma
- Appropriate use of medication

After hearing these and other presentations, the jury will make recommendations addressing the following questions:

- What is depression and how common is it?
- What are the effects of depression for the individual, family, and society?
- What are the risk factors for depression and how can prevention of these improve?
- What are the most appropriate ways for diagnosing depression?
- What are current treatments for depression and what evidence is available for their safety and effectiveness?
- What are the obstacles to effective management of depression and strategies to overcome them?
- What further research is needed in the field?

Conference participants include: Shelagh Rogers (CBC Radio), the Hon. Michael Kirby, and Drs. Scott Patten and Glenda MacQueen from the University of Calgary.

Two pages of story ideas are attached to this media notice. For more information, to obtain a conference program and speaker abstracts, or to set up interviews, please contact:

Rhonda Lothammer  
Institute of Health Economics  
Cell: 780-935-0382

## Story Ideas – Depression in Adults

### **1. Interview with Shelagh Rogers, Broadcast Journalist, CBC Radio**

As someone who suffers from unipolar depression, Shelagh knows about the high personal stakes that come with that diagnosis from exclusion to rejection, from low self esteem to downright shame. Feeling this way puts stress on the family who may themselves become more predisposed to depression. Shelagh has created a Top 10 list of things a depressed person hates to hear.

### **2. Interview with Dr. Glenda MacQueen, new Head, Department of Psychiatry, University of Calgary**

Dr. MacQueen has just taken up her role as the new Head, Department of Psychiatry at the University of Calgary. She is also a researcher whose work includes examining whether there are factors within the brain to determine who is at risk of suicide, in much the same way genetic studies look at the risk for bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

Dr. MacQueen recently reviewed the brain images of more than 1,000 people with depression and 1,000 healthy control subjects, and found the hippocampus to be smaller in those who had suffered several episodes of depression.

The hippocampus is the part of the brain that houses memory. It is also being looked at by mood disorder researchers because people with depression often report problems with memory.

### **3. Interview with the Hon. Michael Kirby, Mental Health Commission of Canada**

Michael Kirby will speak on the lack of a national strategy for dealing with depression and other mental illnesses in Canada. He will be jury chair for the consensus development conference on depression in adults to be held Oct. 15-17 in Calgary

### **4. Impact of depression on individual and families**

#### **a.) Dr. Scott Patten (University of Calgary), Chair, Conference Speakers' Panel**

(co-author of A Profile of Clinical Depression in Canada, February 2008)

Major Depressive Disorder is among the world's most burdensome health problems. According to some projections, Major Depression will be the leading cause of disease burden in high income countries by 2030. Dr. Patten can provide a profile of clinical depression in Canada.

#### **b.) Dr. June Bergman, family physician in Calgary**

Dr. June Bergman has been a full service family physician for over 35 years in Alberta and Ontario. She believes that Primary Care involves caring for the whole person from a biopsychosocial perspective. She states that as primary care physicians, the care of individuals must include physical and mental illness as well as their roots in their family and community. She has been involved for the past 15 years in program development with mental health.

### **5. Depression in the workplace**

Employers have a lot to gain by addressing the root causes of stress and depression in the workplace and having policies and programs to deal with this issue and other mental health related concerns. The Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health estimates mental illness costs the Canadian economy \$50 billion annually in lost productivity.

**a.) Mary Ann Baynton, RSW, MSW, speaking on work-related risk factors**

The majority of supervisors and managers in the workplace have neither the time nor the interest in doing a thorough review of the literature in the area of mental health risk factors. What they want and need is a practical approach that answers the questions, “Why is this my concern?” and “What exactly do you want me to do about it?”.

Mary Ann is the director of Mental Health Works, an initiative of the Canadian Mental Health Association of Ontario. Her current work includes consulting on complex return-to-work situations as well as working to improve unhealthy workplace relations.

**b.) Zorianna Hyworon, CEO, InfoTech Inc., speaking on the impact on the workplace**

A study just released by The Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (JOEM), investigating predictors of productivity loss, shows that depression, balance of stress and satisfaction, and personal life challenges significantly impact on productivity loss for employees, limiting their ability to meet the normal demands of their job. In fact the study shows that while health related issues play a significant role in employee productivity, non-health related issues, such as personal financial concerns, can be equal or greater in their significance.

This case study is based on benchmark data collected through Wellness Checkpoint, a comprehensive health risk assessment that considers employee health and lifestyle risk factors in the context of their job and their life outside of work.

**6. Interview with Dr. Vincent Felitti a noted U.S. physician and researcher on how negative experiences in childhood impact adult mental and physical health**

Dr. Felitti is one of the principal investigators of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, a long-term study that tracks the current health status of 18,000 adults against adverse childhood experiences -- such as physical, sexual and psychological abuse, emotional and physical neglect and a dysfunctional household – which are strongly related to problems later in life.

They underlie high rates of depression, use of antidepressants, obesity, suicide attempts, substance abuse, promiscuity, many chronic diseases and other problems.

Findings to date reveal a powerful relationship between our emotional experiences as children and our physical and mental health as adults, as well as a strong link with the major causes of adult mortality in the United States. In other words, the ACE Study documents the conversion of traumatic emotional experiences in childhood into organic disease later in life.