



## UPDATE FROM THE NATIONAL COALITION ON DUAL DIAGNOSIS

JULY 2010



Developmental Disabilities Section of the  
Canadian Psychiatric Association



NADD Ontario

**July 30, 2010**

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## **Dual Diagnosis Coalition News**

**The Commission has heard the Coalition!** On April 16, 2010 Howard Chodos, Vice-President, Mental Health Strategy, Mental Health Commission of Canada provided the luncheon address at the NADD International Congress held in Toronto. Dr. Chodos provided attendees from Canada, the United States, Europe and the Far East an overview of the work of the Commission to develop a national strategy. He also spoke specifically of how individuals with a dual diagnosis and their families will benefit from a national plan of action. Noteworthy were his comments that confirmed that the needs of individuals with a dual diagnosis, their families and service providers do belong within a national mental health strategy. He spoke about the particular challenges experienced by people with a dual diagnosis and how the seven goals for a mental health system in Canada are applicable to those living with a dual diagnosis. You can contact [Susan\\_Morris@camh.net](mailto:Susan_Morris@camh.net) for a copy of the slide presentation.

**National Coalition Key Messages – The Solutions** The four Sponsoring Organizations (NADD Ontario, CARE-ID, Developmental Disabilities Section of the Canadian Psychiatric Association and the CAMH Dual Diagnosis Program) have developed a key messages document for your use. We believe it provides a clear and consistent message for our coalition supporters to use when talking to local, regional, provincial or national representatives/groups regarding solutions to service and system challenges in meeting the needs of individuals with a dual diagnosis. It expands on the 4 recommendations found in the original Coalition position statement distributed in 2008:

- Enabling government policies
- Development of a competent workforce
- Help for individuals, families, friends and caregivers
- Accurate data and research

The document will be distributed shortly via separate Coalition mailing and it will be posted on our website. We hope that you will find the information in the document reflective of your personal and/or professional experiences and look forward to your comments and feedback.

**Website Update:** We have been having technical difficulties with uploading large files on the current website. Currently available on the site are the following documents:

- Use of psychotropic medication in Canada – survey results
- Original Advocacy Toolkit documents
- Coalition brochure

If you would like copies of various Coalition slide presentations, as listed below, please e-mail [Susan\\_Morris@camh.net](mailto:Susan_Morris@camh.net) directly. We are working to fix this problem. Our apologies for the inconvenience.

- ***Toward a mental health strategy for Canada***, Dr. Howard Chodos. NADD International Conference, Toronto. April 2010
- ***Influencing National Policy: Witnessing from the Margins of Society***, Dr. Bob King. Human Rights and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities Conference Niagara Falls, April 2010
- ***The Place of Dual Diagnosis in the Mental Health Strategy***, Dr. Vikrum Dua & Susan Morris. Into the Light Conference, Vancouver, November, 2009
- ***Influencing National Policy: The Message and Medium***, Susan Morris. Making Gains Conference, Toronto, October 2009

## Mental Health Commission Update

**Mental health strategy roundtables** Following the release *Toward Recovery and Wellbeing, A Framework for a Mental Health Strategy*, the commission has started to hold a series of roundtables to discuss how to achieve the 7 goals outlined in the document. To date, roundtables on the subjects of recovery, mental health promotion, mental illness prevention, family and support and seniors' mental health have occurred. There are more roundtables planned, one of which we hope will focus on co-occurring disorders. **If you have attended a roundtable, the Coalition needs your help.** We would like to know about the session discussion, the outcome of the meeting, and whether you felt that issues relevant to dual diagnosis were addressed. Please e-mail [Susan\\_Morris@camh.net](mailto:Susan_Morris@camh.net)

### 'At Home'/'Chez Soi' Homelessness Housing Projects

Q With the official launch of the project in late 2009, over 150 people have now been housed. Learning about what will work in the local context of each of the 5 sites (Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver), the underlying hypothesis is that once a person has a place to live they can better concentrate on personal issues including their mental health. As you may recall from our December Update, the Winnipeg project is providing services to the aboriginal community and will include individuals with the developmental disability, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). We hope to be able to obtain more information in the late Fall about those with developmental disabilities who have entered the project. The project has also launched a quarterly National Newsletter beginning in June 2010. It can be accessed at <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/homelessness.aspx>

**Mental Health Family Link program** This initiative was first launched in April 2010 in Toronto by the Commission's Family Caregivers Advisory Committee. The mission of the program is to support families affected by mental health problems and illnesses by connecting them with peer volunteers over the telephone, in order to enhance their coping and sustain their well-being. Caregivers are matched with peers who have had similar experiences in their role as caregivers. Peers are required to take an 18 hour training program. Applications to become a Peer Volunteer are available on the Commission website. For more information

<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/MentalHealthFamilyLinkprogram.aspx>  
or call within Toronto: 416-360-1999, Toll free within Ontario: 1-877-313-1999 or e-mail  
[familylink@mentalhealthcommission.ca](mailto:familylink@mentalhealthcommission.ca)

**MHCC Newsletter.** The commission regularly publishes a newsletter that you can receive electronically. Go to this link and click on the sign up link on the left side of the screen.

<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/eNewsletter.aspx>

## **Resource information**

<http://fasdjustice.on.ca> FASD and the Justice System - a new website designed for justice system professionals and others who want to understand more about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). It provides information and resources including background information, case law, legal resources and strategies for effective intervention.

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[www.news.gov.mb.ca](http://www.news.gov.mb.ca). The government of Manitoba announced in September 2009 that it is investing more than \$1.6 million to improve access to diagnostic services and expand resources available to those living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). (From Mental Health Notes, Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario. Sept. 17, 2009.)

[www.un.org/disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities) United Nations' **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** was ratified by the Canadian Federal government March 11, 2010. This Convention is an international treaty that identifies the rights of persons with disabilities, including people with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses. It outlines the obligations of countries to uphold the Convention to promote, protect and ensure those rights. Countries that ratify the agreement are "legally bound to respect the standards in the Convention." Canada initially signed the Convention in 2007, but had not ratified it until now. For more information

**Regards to all**

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