



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
British Columbia
Mental health for all

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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: January 16, 2013

CMHA BC Conference to Focus on Newly Released Workplace Psychological Health and Safety Standard

A “golden opportunity” to learn how to adopt the first-ever National Standard

British Columbia — Today marks a critical turning point in the challenge to build mentally healthy workplaces all around the country. The Canadian Standards Association together with the Mental Health Commission of Canada, release the *National Standard of Canada - Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, promotion and guidance to staged implementation*. The Standard, both for employers and employees, defines and sets a higher standard for workplace mental health with a goal of protecting and improving the mental health of Canadian workers.

The Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division (CMHA BC) believes the Standard provides a structure and systematic process that will make it easier for Canadian employers to develop and improve psychologically healthy and safe work environments. To help move the Standard from theory to implementation, the CMHA BC will host a conference on February 27 and 28 at the Vancouver Convention Centre. The theme of the Bottom Line Conference is “Celebrating a New Era in Workplace Mental Health: Putting National Standards into Practice”. It will bring together business and labour leaders, policy-makers, health professionals, and workers to share practical approaches to improve mental health in Canadian workplaces.

“In an environment of increasing chronic workplace stress which, if not addressed, can result in both physical and psychological harm, we have seen a growing need for clearly defined guidelines to protect employees’ mental health, says Lynn Spence, Acting CEO of CMHA BC.

“Employers and unions are increasingly aware of the benefits of taking responsibility and prioritizing mental wellness, and the Standard provides guidelines for taking practical steps to do so, she says. “CMHA’s tenth annual Bottom Line Conference celebrates this important milestone and gives Canadian workplace leaders a golden opportunity to learn how to adopt the new Standard.”

44% of Canadian employees report experiencing mental health problems. An estimated \$20.7 billion loss in labour force participation is due to common mental disorders. The Standard will offer employers, employees and employee representatives guidance to address these issues in their workplace.

Implementing the Standard will benefit employers as well as workers. Research indicates that employers who implement effective workplace safety and wellness strategies perform better in key categories such as employee engagement, lower turnover, and shareholder returns.

According to a 2012 Conference Board of Canada survey, a majority of managers say that while they are informed about mental health issues, most feel ill equipped and would benefit from training to help employees with mental health problems stay at work or return to work successfully and healthily. That’s where CMHA comes in. For over 10 years, CMHA has been providing training for workplaces to help them through workplace-focussed education and training, including its award-winning Mental Health Works program. To learn more about this training, visit www.cmha.bc.ca.

To learn more about the CMHA’s 10th Anniversary Bottom Line Conference and to access the new National Standard at no cost, visit www.bottomlineconference.ca.

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