



Centre for Addiction and  
Mental Health

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December 13, 2007

The Honourable Tony Clement  
Minister of Health, Health Canada  
Brooke Claxton Building, Tunney's Pasture  
Postal Locator: 0906C  
Ottawa, ON, Canada K1A 0K9

**Re: The Canadian Health Network**

Dear Minister Clement,

I am writing to you today to urge you keep the Canadian Health Network up and running.

As you know, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) has a mission to improve the lives of those affected by addiction and mental health problems, and promote the health of people in Ontario and beyond. The Canadian Health Network strongly supports CAMH's mission by providing the Canadian public - and professionals working with the public - access to high quality information on a broad array of vitally important mental health and substance use topics.

Mental health and addictions are stigmatized illnesses. Health promotion and early intervention, especially for young people, is critical. Research tells us that the majority of people who suffer from these problems do not receive medical attention for them. We know that individuals with mental illness, substance abuse or gambling problems (or who are at risk of developing them) - as well as their families and friends - rely heavily on the Internet for confidential access to information about these debilitating problems.

But accessing high quality health information about mental illness or addictions can be quite challenging, especially information that is presented in the larger physical health context and that is national in scope. Health care professionals, as well as the public at large, face a constant and growing challenge to identify information from trusted organizations on the Internet.

As a health care provider we value and rely on the availability and accessibility of vetted resources provided through the Canadian Health Network, and have been pleased to contribute quality information to help others. There is no equivalent knowledge base in Canada that provides this kind of window to the best health information resources developed by hundreds of organizations.

The Canadian Health Network is a comprehensive, essential resource to foster health promotion, prevention and intervention in mental health and addiction problems. Rather than closing down the Network, we ask that you consider the investment that has gone

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University of Toronto

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de Toronto

into developing and maintaining this trusted resource, and ensure it moves forward to continue to address these serious health concerns.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Garfinkel, MD, FRCP(C)  
President and CEO