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New CEO for Canadian Mental Health Association/Peel David Smith to head Region's leading community-based mental health organization

BRAMPTON, Ontario - The Canadian Mental Health Association/Peel Branch (CMHA/Peel) today announces that **David Smith** has been named as the new Chief Executive Officer, effective February 3, 2014.

"The Board of Directors is excited to welcome David to CMHA/Peel to lead our dedicated staff," says board chair Gilles Paquette. "David's experience, expertise and leadership qualities are highly regarded and will ensure our continued success in promoting *mental health for all*, and evolving our services to best serve the Region of Peel."

For the past 7 years David has led the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's Community Mental Health and Community Support Services Common Assessment Project team. This team was responsible for the development of common assessment tools and standards, as well as common business processes, for mental health and community support service organizations throughout the province. David brings over 20 years of varied career experience in mental health service provision and management, and began his career as a frontline community mental health worker, working for several different CMHA branches in housing and case management.

"I'm excited to be joining CMHA/Peel," says David. "I look forward to being part of a team that not only provides excellent services and empowers clients, but also actively engages in community development and education around mental health."

David completed his MBA in the UK, and subsequently worked as the project manager for a European Union funded deprivation project in the northern United Kingdom. He returned to health services and project managed the integration of five child and adolescent mental health services, eventually heading the new division in the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Mental Health (OBMH) NHS Trust.

David completed his time in the UK as the Associate Director of Operations for OBMH leading the implementation of the *National Mental Health Service Framework* including introduction of Crisis Teams, Early Intervention in Psychosis services, Assertive Community Treatment Teams and Complex Needs Services. He was also responsible for the implementation of new electronic Care Planning and assessment technologies.

Mr. Smith replaces long-time CMHA/Peel CEO and mental health advocate, Sandy Milakovic, who is retiring after 33 years with the organization. CMHA/Peel's board of directors and staff warmly welcome David to the team.

About CMHA/Peel

For over 50 years, the Canadian Mental Health Association – Peel Branch (CMHA/Peel) has been a pioneer in providing services for people with mental illness and educating Canadians about mental health issues. As the leading client-driven, community-based mental health organization serving the Region of Peel, we are innovative partners in proactively strengthening individual support, and developing a responsive mental health system. CMHA/Peel champions good mental health for everyone and supports the full participation of those with mental illness and addictions in the life of the community. In addition to providing a variety of mental health services, we are committed to community development, mental health awareness and addressing the stigma surrounding mental illness.

About Mental Illness

Mental illness affects everyone, either personally, or through family members, friends, or colleagues. One in five Canadians will personally experience a mental illness at some point in their lifetime and suicide is one of the leading causes of death in both men and women from adolescence to middle age.

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