

# WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

## World Mental Health Day draws top researchers from across Canada

Forty-one Canadian cities have joined with civic, business, education, medical and other health leaders and more than 30 countries worldwide, to draw public attention to what a news report describes as an unheralded crisis in the rise of mental health illness at a time of intensive and radical economic and social change in Canada, North America and beyond.

Markham Mayor Don Cousens launched the Mayor's National Initiative on Mental Health, which brought all 10 provinces and Canada's northern territories to escalate public awareness of the high economic and social stakes we have in the mental well-being of Canadians at the community level.

Bill Wilkerson, president of Canadian Business and Economic Roundtable on Mental Health, vice-chairman of

the Mayor's National Initiative and co-director of the Centre for Organization Health at Riverslea and Dr. Edgardo Perez, CEO of Homewood Health Centre are co-author of a book on mental health and economic performance.

Wilkerson said the Homewood study found a surging growth in mental disorders worldwide costing North America alone an estimated \$250 billion a year.

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Wilkerson said depression is emerging as the most destructive source of disability in the loss of the productive working years of working people.

Combined with heart disease, depression - in these terms - will be the single leading source of economic dissolution and human suffering.

If trends continue, depression will wield a greater "swath of disability" than cancer, AIDS, violence or wars.

Canada's mayors will aim to draw attention to the crisis by way of World Mental Health Day proclamations and public education initiatives - centered around national event in the Markham Council Chambers - to commemorate World Mental Health Day in Canada on October 8, 1998.

This event, a roundtable discussion involving a number of Canada's leading researchers, clinicians and business executives, will explore the latest research data on the linkages between depression and heart disease.

Leading Canadian research will set out the current expanse and limits of scientific knowledge in the subject.

One pressing concern for the medical community, and the wider public, is evidence that cardiac victims who contract clinical depression face a much higher risk of complications in the recovery from heart disease - and the evidence points to a five-times greater risk of suffering sudden death within a six-month period.

At the same time, a collation of data will show that mental illness, emotional disorders, stress and depression are having a profound influence on corporate and economic performance.

The data shows that mental anxiety and stress are now more frequently declared as a source of employee absenteeism than physical injury or disease.

This will be the first time that World Mental Health Day, a global education effort under the auspices of the World Federation for Mental Health and the World Health Organization, will be recognized in Canada.

It has also drawn the interest of the wife of Canada's Governor General, Her Excellency, Mrs. Diana Fowler LeBlanc, the First Lady of Canada.

She will receive a proclamation from the Mayor's National Initiative on Mental Health on behalf of Canadians.

World Mental Health Day in Canada also has the support of the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Canadian Psychiatric Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario.

### OCTOBER 8 EVENTS

✓ Everyone is invited to the Roundtable event which will be held at the Markham Council Chambers in the Civic Centre. People will be able to listen to some of the top researchers in Canada speak about Mental Health.

✓ The local Canadian Mental Health Association will be hosting free screenings for depression and manic depression from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

✓ Markham Stouffville Hospital will host a public information forum entitled: Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies, Understanding the Link, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The moderator for this session is Dr. David Kocerginski, the chief of psychiatry for Markham Stouffville Hospital.

There will be four topics in the forum and they include: Is stress bad for you? Unchain your heart, Chronic pain: the mind/body connection; hormones and your moods; understanding PMS and stress, burnout and depression in the marketplace.

For details about Health Minds/Healthy Bodies contact Pam Brodie, director of marketing at Markham Stouffville Hospital at 472-7032 or visit their website at [www.msh.on.ca](http://www.msh.on.ca)

For details about World Mental Health Day contact Ric Arment, director of World Mental Health Day and manager of marketing and communications at Homewood Health Centre at 824-1010 ext. 459 or Mayor Don Cousens at 475-4872.

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