



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR LA PRÉVENTION DU SUICIDE  
870 Portage Avenue Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0P1

To All Members of Parliament,

October 5, 2011

October 4, 2011 was a landmark and long hoped for day in Canada and will no doubt be a defining moment for our country. Canada took a giant step towards establishing a funded national suicide prevention strategy. Yesterday parliamentarians from every party came together and with one non partisan voice sent a powerful message to the millions of Canadians whose lives have been touched by suicide "we see and hear your suffering, we stand with you, we will share your burden and we will take action".

On behalf of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP) and the Association Quebecoise de Prévention du Suicide (AQPS) we wish to applaud and express our gratitude for the courageous, compassionate and long awaited step that all members of parliament took this week to recognize suicide as a national public health priority and the promise to establish and fund a national suicide prevention strategy. October 4<sup>th</sup> was a day when all Canadians could be proud of our elected representatives from all parties.

Getting to this place took a long time and we have only a short time in which to put this promise into action. Every day another ten Canadians die by suicide. The hard work really begins now and will require the same unity and commitment to non partisan cooperation and collaboration as was demonstrated by all members of Parliament in the House of Commons yesterday. CASP and AQPS are offering our collective knowledge and expertise in the areas of suicide prevention, intervention and postvention and can assist in navigating the development of a national strategy. To that end our blue print for a national suicide prevention strategy is at your disposal. We hope that this document will be a helpful starting point for the many conversations that will no doubt take place over the ensuing months. CASP has made significant contributions in informing the development of both provincial and regional strategies and we hope that it will now help inform the development and implementation of a national strategy.

Regardless of where responsibility and authority for our national strategy may eventually rest it is critical that the strategy be a comprehensive roadmap and integrated approach that moves beyond the health sector and becomes a whole of government and community solution. It is crucial that a suicide prevention strategy be a significant pillar of a comprehensive public health policy and mental health strategy. In the following months we must remember that suicide is not just a mental health issue, it is a public and community health issue that requires a multi- sectoral approach that crosses over many domains.

Once again thank you all for compassion and concern for this critical public health issue and the non partisan cooperation you demonstrated. We know that many people from all parties made enormous contributions to make this a reality and would like to make specific mention of the tremendous efforts

and contributions that have been made by your fellow MP's the Hon. Harold Albrecht, the Hon. Megan Leslie and the Hon. Bob Rae.

We look forward to working with the Government of Canada to bring this to fruition and make families and communities across Canada safer, healthier and better equipped to meet their full potential and realize their dreams.

Yours truly,

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