



## RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

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PETITION No.: **421-02937**

BY: **MR. MCKINNON (COQUITLAM-PORT COQUITLAM)**

DATE: **NOVEMBER 21, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **MR. JOHN OLIVER**

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Response by the Minister of Health

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

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SUBJECT

**National day**

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**ORIGINAL TEXT**

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**REPLY**

World Mental Health Day was observed for the first time on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1992 and continues to be commemorated every year on that date. It was started by the World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) – an international membership organization – to promote mental health advocacy and public awareness. Given its commitment to advancing mental health on the national and international stage, the Government of Canada has joined other countries in promoting World Mental Health Day on October 10<sup>th</sup> (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/calendar-health-promotion-days.html>).

Some countries commemorate World Mental Health Day as part of an awareness week (e.g., Australia's Mental Health Week coincides with the day). In Canada, Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) was established in the same year and continues to be observed every October. It is coordinated by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH), which uses its Faces of Mental Illness campaign, featuring the stories of Canadians living in recovery from mental illness, to promote awareness and reduce stigma. Through this initiative, Canadians, including parliamentarians and other decision-makers, are engaged in discussions regarding the need to promote mental health, prevent mental illness and increase access to mental health services.

The Government of Canada is working to strengthen mental health efforts on the international stage and at home. For example, Canada recently co-founded, with the United Kingdom and Australia, the Alliance of Champions for Mental

Health and Wellbeing, a coalition of international leaders helping to advance the global mental health agenda. Recognizing the importance of access to mental health services here in Canada, Budget 2017 confirmed a historic targeted investment of \$5 billion over ten years directly to provinces and territories to improve mental health services for Canadians. This investment will address specific gaps in the availability of mental health services, particularly for children and youth.

In addition to this, the Public Health Agency of Canada works with partners and stakeholders to put in place community-based programs and initiatives that promote mental health and contribute to the prevention of mental illness. For example, the Public Health Agency of Canada provides funding to family and gender-based violence prevention projects, promotes child and youth mental health through the Mental Health Promotion Innovation Fund, and also funds maternal and child health programs that help build resilience in vulnerable young children.