

Bill #6
The Mental Health Act
Moved By: Minister of Human Resources

WHEREAS “Only 1 out of 5 children in Canada who need mental health services receives them”¹; and

WHEREAS “Suicide accounts for 24% of all deaths among 15-24 year olds and 16% among 25–44 year olds in Canada”²; and

WHEREAS “Stigma, cost, and the fragmented organization of mental health services are all barriers to treatment.”³

THEREFORE HER MAJESTY, BY AND WITH THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE YOUTH PARLIAMENT OF MANITOBA, ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

Purpose

- 1 The purpose of this Act is to
 - (1) Establish **CARES** with the mandate set out in Clause (4).
 - (2) Ensure that every Canadian has a designated mental health professional (in addition to their family doctor)
 - (3) Increase the number of mental health professionals working in Canada.
 - (4) Make all mental health services free for all Canadians.
 - (5) Lower the minimum age for confidential care to 13 years of age.

Definitions

- 2 In this bill, the following terms are defined as
 - (1) **Mental health professional**: A licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse, counselor, or clinical social worker
 - (2) **Mental health services**: Psychiatric medication, addictions treatment, eating disorder treatment, cognitive behavioural therapy, psychotherapy, or any similar scientifically supported type of mental health care.

Establish CARES

- 3 The Canadian Agency for Relevant and Equitable Services [**CARES**] is hereby established.

Mandate and Powers

- 4 The mandate of **CARES** is to expand access to mental health and psychiatric services for all people living in Canada.

¹ Canadian Mental Health Association, “Fast Facts about Mental Illness,” <https://cmha.ca/about-cmha/fast-facts-about-mental-illness>.

² Ibid.

³ Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Pathophysiology and Prevention of Adolescent and Adult Suicide, *Suicide Prevention and Intervention: Summary of a Workshop* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2001).

- 5 **CARES** will be comprised of:
- (1) Mental health professionals
 - (2) Members of relevant national non-profit organizations whose mandate includes mental health services and advocacy, such as:
 - (a) The Mental Health Commission of Canada
 - (b) The Canadian Mental Health Association
 - (c) The Canadian Medical Association
 - (d) The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation

Every Canadian will have a Designated Mental Health Professional

- 6 **CARES** is responsible for ensuring that everyone living in Canada has access to a designated mental health professional.
- (1) This mental health professional must be separate from their family doctor or general practitioner.
 - (2) Any individual may contact **CARES** to be assigned a mental health professional, and **CARES** must provide them a referral within one week.

All Mental Health Services will be Free for all Canadians

- 7 **CARES** is responsible for ensuring that all people living in Canada receive full coverage for all costs associated with mental health services, including all services defined in (2.2).

Number of Mental Health professionals will be Gradually Increased

- 8 **CARES** will work with universities, regulatory bodies, medical schools, and hospitals to increase the number of mental health professionals by:
- (1) Increasing the number of residency positions for psychiatrists.
 - (2) Retroactively subsidizing the cost of medical school for those specializing in psychiatry.
 - (3) Subsidizing the cost of education and certification for mental health professionals.

Funding for Provinces to Expand Mental Health Services

- 9 **CARES** will provide funds to all provinces for:
- (1) Hiring psychiatrists on a one-to-one ratio with family doctors.
 - (2) expanding primary care clinics to accommodate mental health services.
 - (3) Running educational campaigns promoting the new system to the public.

Development of Mental Health Infrastructure in First Nations

- 10 **CARES** will oversee the creation of necessary infrastructure in all First Nations to ensure that every First Nations resident has access to mental health services equal to all other Canadian residents.

Minimum Age for Confidential Care is Lowered to 13

- 11 The minimum age for confidential care is hereby lowered to 13 years of age.
- (1) This confidentiality is void if the patient is between the ages of 13 and 18 and is determined to be:
 - (a) A danger to themselves and/or others.
 - (b) Incapable of consenting due to their mental state.