



CANADIAN MENTAL  
HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
POUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE  
WINNIPEG REGION



PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE  
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Media Release

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**National project aims to highlight human rights issues for persons with mental illness**

**Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) funds national project to examine issues of equality, dignity and inclusion for people with mental illness**

The Canadian Mental Health Association – Winnipeg office (CMHA) in partnership with the Public Interest Law Centre of Legal Aid Manitoba have been engaged by the Mental Health Commission of Canada's (MHCC) Mental Health and the Law Advisory Committee to conduct research related to mental health, human rights, and relevant law, policies, and service standards. One of the Committee's mandates is to examine Canada's legal framework as it relates to persons with mental illness, including legislation, regulations, and policies.

"This is a very exciting year to engage in this work, with Canada's recent ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Person's with Disabilities we can see there is a real spotlight now on how we protect these rights throughout Canada." Nicole Chammartin, Executive Director, CMHA Winnipeg adds, "CMHA has been a long standing advocate for human rights for people experiencing mental health issues, and we know Canadians value human rights as being a core part of the Canadian experience, but unfortunately that is not always the case for everyone."

A key component to this project will be the work of a consultative group of persons who have experienced mental health issues that will guide the research and development of an evaluative framework for national and provincial mental health related laws and policies, as well as the development of a draft set of core service standards.

Six individuals representing the pre-determined pilot jurisdictions of Manitoba, Nova Scotia, British Columbia have been selected as members of the consultative group as well as one individual each from Quebec and the Northwest Territories. Lindsay Evangelista, a consultative group member from BC shares, "I knew something needed to be done when I first entered the assessment unit at one of the hospitals. The staff seemed totally disinterested in my care and I had one nurse tell me that I was faking all my symptoms and called me the equivalent of a female dog. Needless to say, it was the worst experience of my life."

This 18-month project is now underway with an anticipated completion date of September 2011. For more information on this project please visit [www.cmhawpg.mb.ca](http://www.cmhawpg.mb.ca) for a project description, information on the consultative group and updates on progress throughout this project. In addition, the project research team is aiming to consult with other stakeholders in each of the pilot jurisdictions and there is an opportunity to indicate your interest in being involved when you visit the site.

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