House of Commons
Chambre des communes
Canada

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance – Pre-budget Consultations 2013

This brief is submitted by:

(●) **an organization** **Organization name:** Partners for Mental Health

or

( ) **an individual** **Name:** _____

Topic: Health

*Recommendation 1: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Partners for Mental Health is calling on the federal government to invest $100 million over 4 years in a newly created National Youth Suicide Prevention Fund ("the Fund"). This Fund will provide dollar-for-dollar matching funds to provincial and territorial governments, or not-for-profit organizations, to create and support youth suicide prevention initiatives and programs across the country.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$10 million-$99.9 million

Please select from the drop down menu

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Investing in suicide prevention benefits all young people but especially those who suffer from depression, mood disorders, mental illness or who have a history of suicide-related behavior. Particularly vulnerable populations including Aboriginal and LGBT youth will also benefit.

In addition, a reduction in suicide rates will also benefit parents, siblings, grandparents, friends, co-workers, teachers - the very people who suffer enormously from the death of a loved one.

The funded community-based suicide prevention programs will reach across the country at local, regional and P/T levels.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Youth who experience better mental health are more likely to do well in school, increasing their career prospects later in life. Those who die by suicide deprive us of the contributions they have yet to make.

Investing in suicide prevention arms young people with the tools they need to become resilient, fully productive members of our labour force, contributing to the economic growth and prosperity of Canada.

With average costs estimated at $850,000 per suicide, economic savings resulting from fewer deaths by suicides would positively impact an already overburdened health care system.

Topic: Please select from the pull-down menu

Recommendation 2: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

Please select from the drop down menu

Please select from the drop down menu

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Topic: Please select from the pull-down menu

Recommendation 3: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

Please select from the drop down menu

Please select from the drop down menu

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Please use this page if you wish to provide more explanation about your recommendation(s).

One in six children and youth in Canada will experience a mental health problem that impacts their ability to function in school, at home or in their community. We also know that 70% of all mental health disorders begin before the age of 25, and are the most common medical illness amongst teenagers. Sadly, at least three out of five children and youth with mental health challenges are not receiving mental health services – that's approximately 1.6 million children and youth in Canada.

This lack of support for children and youth mental health needs has a devastating and tragic cost. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 10-24 year olds, and the leading cause of death in children and adolescents ages 10-19 in First Nations populations. It accounts for nearly one quarter of all deaths in this age group annually. One of the most important risk factors for suicide is the presence of an untreated mental disorder, which is the case in 90% of teen suicides.

The economic burden of suicide is a cost borne by all of society. And while estimates for the costs of suicide have been developed, it is important to note that there are many other costs of suicide that are not captured in these estimates, and most importantly that these costs pale in comparison to the price that is paid by all those who lose a loved one to suicide. The human costs of youth suicides that ripple throughout families, schools and whole communities are immeasurable.

While it is difficult to precisely quantify the costs of suicide and suicidal behaviours, the following statistics have been compiled by leading experts in Canada.

3,750 Canadians die each year by suicide, an average of 10 suicides per day. A Canadian study has estimated that average direct and indirect costs per suicide is $850,000, which means that the annual costs of suicide in Canada is at least $3,187,500,000 - a staggering number.

For each death by suicide there are as many as 100 suicide attempts. The estimated cost of attempted suicide ranges from $33,000 to $308,000 per individual depending on the hospital services and rehabilitation and the family disruption and support required following the attempt. The annual cost of suicide attempts in Canada is estimated to be in the range of $3 to $30 million.

Investing in suicide prevention must be an important priority for our country, and where economic evaluations have been done, the arguments for intervention are strong. Even a 10% reduction in suicides could mean savings of over $300 million annually , the benefits of which would be realized immediately, and over the life of the suicide prevention activities that the Fund will support.

*Please note that at least one recommendation must be provided