



Statement

July 7, 2016

For Immediate Release

Today's announcement that the provincial government has provided one-time funding to the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division to support the Confident Parents: Thriving Kids program is a positive step.

During the past 10 years, my Office has consistently found that mental health issues are a major concern for children and youth and their families across British Columbia and that accessing services is often confusing and difficult. Any resources dedicated to addressing mental health are welcome.

However, while such one-time announcements are helpful, B.C. still clearly lacks a comprehensive system of supports and services to fully address mental health needs of children and youth. As recommended in our report, *Still Waiting: First-hand Experiences with Youth Mental Health Services in B.C. (2013)* a robust, fully-funded, multi-year plan to address the complex issue of child and youth mental health is what is required.

My Office has also called for the establishment of a single point of accountability in government to be responsible for child and youth mental health. That call has been echoed by the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth in its report *Concrete Actions for Systemic Change (2016)* which has recommended establishment of a new Minister for Mental Health in addition to 22 other recommendations designed to improve mental health services to children and youth in B.C.

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