



**MDSC/Canadian Community Mental Health Network (CCMHN)
Monthly Meeting Minutes**

Date: February 12, 2024

Location: Teams

Link to next meeting: [here](#)

Attendees:

- Dave Gallson
- Martin Boucher
- Gary Thandi
- Martin Binnette
- Sharla Robertson
- Alison O'Handley
- Kristina Hennessey Braun
- Hana, Laura (Impact Public Affairs)

Meeting Minutes: CCMHN Monthly Meeting

Agenda Items:

1. Opening Remarks and Updates

- Welcome and introductions by Dave Gallson.
- Each participant shared personal and organizational updates, covering a range of topics including funding for veterans, student placements, job changes, and restructuring within organizations.
- Martin Binnette has moved from Relief to become the Vice President of Growth and Development at a MedTech startup in Montreal focused on a wellness application. Despite his new role, Martin maintains his involvement with Relief as a consultant and ambassador.

2. Advocacy Efforts

- Discussion on the strategy for sending letters to MPs to influence mental health policy and funding. It was noted that successful campaigns in the past involved significant pressure through thousands of letters, signaling the importance of community mobilization.



- The significance of the letter-writing campaign was highlighted. Strategies for getting constituents involved and the possibility of sending repeat letters were also explored.
- The tentative budget release date is set for March 2024.

3. **Communications**

- Hana from Impact Public Affairs provided an in-depth overview of the functionalities and purpose behind the upcoming website or portal intended primarily for the members of CCMHN. Here's a detailed breakdown of what she shared regarding the site:
 - Research and Training: The site will include programs or modules aimed at empowering staff through various training methods or community support strategies, exemplified by projects like "Depression in the Workplace" by MDSC.
 - Resources and Tools: It will also host an array of resources and tools, such as MIRA, etc.
 - Communications Section: This part of the site focuses on members' communications needs concerning MPs and parliamentarians, including outgoing and incoming messages. It will serve as a repository for assets, templates, and letterheads, aiding organizational communication.
 - Meeting Minutes and Governance: A critical component detailed by Hana will be the transparency and accessibility in governance through the publication of transcribed board meetings and minutes, ensuring members can track decisions, discussions, and updates even if they missed a meeting.
 - Access and Membership: The portal will feature login access, exclusively available to members.

4. **Outreach to Parliamentary Secretaries**

- Laura Rinaldi detailed efforts in reaching out to new parliamentary secretaries, emphasizing the importance of keeping CCMHN's advocacy efforts nonpartisan and establishing widespread political support for mental health initiatives.

5. **Questions and Comments**

- An open floor for questions and comments allowed attendees to seek clarification on advocacy strategies, share news on parallel initiatives such as the development of a nonprofit network in BC, and discuss potential impacts on federal policy.



Actions Items:

- **Follow-up on MP Letters:** Enhance the letter-writing campaign, considering strategy adjustments and encouraging repeat submissions by individuals to maintain pressure.
- **Nonpartisan Outreach:** Continued engagement with parliamentary stakeholders across party lines to support mental health initiatives.
- **Monitoring New Initiatives:** Keep an eye on development within provinces like BC that align with CCMHN goals and could inform federal advocacy.

Closing Remarks

- Dave Gallson thanked everyone for their contributions and insights, emphasizing the value of collaborative efforts in advancing mental health support and policy across Canada. He inquired if any members would like to lead the next meeting - Alison O'Handley volunteered to chair next meeting.