

## Don't stigmatize mental illness

The Standard (St. Catharines)

Monday, April 18, 2005

Page: A5

Section: Viewpoint

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Source: The Standard

Employees deserve help to deal with mental illness (Standard editorial, April 15) highlights the work of the Global Business and Economic **Roundtable** on Addictions and **Mental** Health. Their work serves to educate the public about the situation in Canada and the need to de-stigmatize mental illness.

The **Roundtable** should be congratulated for leadership and interest in the state of **mental** health care in Canada.

A comprehensive mental-health care system must include: access to a range of treatments; availability of "bed-based" care; delivery of service by qualified health practitioners; timely access to services; access to psychiatrists and treatment teams; a range of community supports and services; early intervention and assessment; awareness of patients' rights; inclusion of peer support workers to support clients; crisis intervention services; housing; employment; having an adequate income; access to the latest medications; an investment in research; anti-stigma campaigns; independent advocacy and rights advice services.

The mental-health system would be well served if it adopted a recovery focus, became more client-centred, encouraged a "client-first perspective" and involved clients in all decisions that affect their care, life and treatment.

Without a well co-ordinated and well-funded mental-health system, individuals with mental illness will continue to be at risk and not have their needs met.

As a community, let's take a thoughtful look at how we can best support individuals in their quest for wellness and recovery, and recognize the contributions of every member of the community, including those with mental illness.

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Idnumber: 200504180054

Edition: Final

Story Type: Letter

Length: 254 words

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