



“Working Proudly with the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace”

2nd US-CANADA FORUM ON MENTAL HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY
November 14, 2007 – 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Canadian War Museum, Barney Danson Theatre
1 Vimy Place, Ottawa, Canada

November 8, 2007

To: Participants of the 2nd US-Canada Forum on Mental Health and Productivity
Re: Briefing Note and Final Agenda

The attached agenda is self-explanatory and includes the “time and place” details. Let me emphasize the importance to bring photo I.D. for security reasons.

This briefing note is to give you content, context and background concerning the 2nd Forum and the Forum Series.

The 1st Forum was convened in Washington last February 15th and through the leadership, vision and comments of Ambassador Michael Wilson, established the bedrock themes of the Forum which define its purpose. These are:

- To build a framework for an on-going, long-term strategic alliance between major corporations in the US and Canada, publicly-funded research agencies, private foundations and the broader scientific community.
- To focus this Alliance on tackling the big questions in mental health and addiction research and, in doing so, to build this Alliance around the concepts of “cure and prevention.”
- To link this Alliance with broad business, economic and public policy goals embraced by the over-arching theme of this initiative “mental health and productivity.”
- To align the Alliance – philosophically and pragmatically – with Ambassador Wilson’s proposition that –
 - 1) All the great issues in the world today demand international solutions.
 - 2) In terms of US-Canada joint interest, mental health belongs in the company of trade, energy, security and the environment.
- To found the alliance on the cornerstones of –
 - Brain health
 - Brain research
 - Brain literacy
 - The brain economy. (85% of new jobs demand cerebral skills)

Where the 1st Forum “set the table” for the assimilation of these themes into an argument for cooperation and leadership between business and spread in the US and Canada – the 2nd Forum digs deeper.

The attached agenda, in a nutshell, brings forth –

- Model for CEO Leadership in Mental Health and CFO engagement to facilitate this.
- A Workplace Partnership modeled by the American Psychiatric Association to invite workplace efforts in both countries to develop and define best practices on three levels:
 - The promotion of mental health
 - The prevention of mental disabilities
 - The build-up of healthy work environments
- The findings of the Kessler-led Depression and Work Performance Study demonstrating the cost-benefits of treating depression.
- A preview of an unprecedented survey to look at depression through the experience of managers and employees. (This Ipsos-Reid Survey was commissioned by the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace.)
- The Draft Framework for the Business/Science Alliance we are calling “The Brain Trust.” This concept has been developed through interviews with top people in business and science in the US and Canada.

Enveloping these unveilings will be the remarks of the panel of keynote speakers.

With deep regret, we must report that Honourable Michael Kirby, Chairman of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, will not be with us due to serious illness in his family.

Highlights of this 2nd Forum:

Our special Guests include Canada’s Minister of Health, Honourable Tony Clement, and Laureen Harper, wife of Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The Prime Minister has taken a personal hand in the creation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

The 3rd Forum will be held in the US next spring and we will announce the theme of this next week. The 4th and final Forum will then be held next fall back in Canada and at that point, we hope to see the US-Canada Business-Science Brain Trust a reality.

Once again, many thanks for being part of this. We are most grateful.

Best regards,
Bill Wilkerson

Reference:

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