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**Honourable Michael J.L. Kirby**  
The Senate of Canada (Retired)

***Kirby Says New Canadian Mental Health Commission is  
“Necessary First Step to Bring Mental Illness Out of the Shadows -- Forever”***

***“Respect and Dignity for people with mental illness. That’s our Canada”  
Finance Minister Jim Flaherty***

TORONTO, Ontario ( March 19, 2007) – The Roundtable’s current chairman and former senator Michael Kirby today was named first chairman of the new Canadian Mental Health Commission.

In a statement following the announcement by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty in his budget speech in the House of Commons, Mr. Kirby said the Commission is a “necessary first step to bring mental illness out of the shadows – forever.”

“Our goal should be nothing less,” he said.

The Finance Minister said in the House of Commons today that “funding in this budget will establish and support a Canadian Mental Health Commission to lead the development of a national mental health strategy.” He declared “respect and dignity for people with mental illness. That’s our Canada.”

The Commission was proposed by the Senate Committee on Science, Social Affairs and Technology – chaired by Mr. Kirby – in a report last spring titled “Out of the Shadows – At Last”.

Mr. Kirby said the Commission would be headquartered in Calgary and five priorities will define its start-up agenda:

- Stigma reduction
- Creation of a national Knowledge Exchange Centre
- Aboriginal mental health
- Children’s mental health
- Workplace mental health

Mr. Kirby said the Commission would create advisory committees in several of these areas to ensure that the voices of Canadians “resonated” in the work of the Commission.

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***Refer:***

Honourable Michael Kirby, Chairman                    941-358-6215  
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Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health