

## *News Release*

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### **Showing compassion theme of 2011-12 Annual Report**

*Edmonton* – The 2011-12 annual report of the Alberta Mental Health Patient Advocate Office (MHPAO) has been submitted to Alberta Health Minister Fred Horne. Tabled in the legislature today, the report focuses on the theme of compassion and features interviews with several Albertans speaking about the role compassion has played in their lives. The report also describes the MHPAO’s function, core activities, summarizes the year’s highlights, activities and major statistics and comments on some emerging trends and issues.

“Over the course of a lifetime, everyone will have a mental illness or know someone close who does. We all benefit when our society treats persons living with mental illness with dignity, respect and compassion,” says Fay Orr, Alberta’s fourth Mental Health Patient Advocate since the office was established in 1990.

Among the trends and emerging issues identified in the report is the need to complete the transition from institutional to community-based mental health care and treatment. “More supportive housing, wrap-around supports, and better discharge planning will help more people make the transition from hospital to community living. Providing more information and support will help to reduce stress and frustration for families currently struggling to cope with the mental illness of a family member,” says Orr.

In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, the MHPAO opened 1, 867 new files. The office conducted 542 investigations, a 25 per cent increase from the year before.

The MHPAO is the only provincial investigative body in Canada created specifically to look into complaints and concerns from or relating to persons subject to certificates or community treatment orders under the *Mental Health Act*.

The MHPAO works to promote and protect the rights of mental health patients and those acting on their behalf by ensuring they are informed about their rights under the Mental Health Act. The Office also acts as a resource to patients and health system care givers, and helps Albertans navigate the mental health system by providing referrals and links to other programs and oversight bodies. As well, the Advocate provides input into legislation, services and policies that affect persons living with mental illness.

The 2011-2012 annual report can be found online at [www.mhpa.ab.ca](http://www.mhpa.ab.ca)

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