

Alberta Association for  
Community Living

Alberta Association for  
Marriage and Family Therapy

Alberta Association of  
Registered Occupational  
Therapists

Alberta College of Social  
Workers

Alberta Committee of Citizens  
with Disabilities

Alberta Mental Health  
Self Help Network

Alberta Psychiatric  
Association

Boyle Street Co-op

Calgary Dual Diagnosis  
Committee

Canadian Mental Health  
Association

Depression and Manic  
Depression Association of  
Alberta

Edmonton City Centre  
Church Corporation

Psychologists' Association  
of Alberta

Registered Psychiatric  
Nurses' Association of  
Alberta

Schizophrenia Society of  
Alberta

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The AAMIMH  
acknowledges the ongoing  
participation of the  
**Premier's Council on the  
Status of Persons with  
Disabilities**, recognizing its  
mandate as an objective  
liaison between community  
and government stakeholders

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## MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### IMPLEMENT MAZANKOWSKI'S MENTAL HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS NOW!

— Meeting with Health and Wellness Minister held January 16

EDMONTON, ALBERTA, January 17, 2002

The Alberta Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, in a meeting with Health and Wellness Minister Gary Mar yesterday, called on the Government to immediately implement the Mazankowski report's mental health recommendations. The Alliance recommends:

- That the Minister appoint a transition committee to oversee the many issues involved in the transfer. The composition of this committee should include two members from the Department of Health and Wellness, two members from the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs), two from the Alberta Mental Health Board (AMHB), and two members from the Alberta Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (AAMIMH) – representing professionals, non-profit agencies and family and client organizations.
- That the Minister announce a quick and expeditious time line (nine-month transition period) for transferring core authority to the RHAs.

“The Premier’s Council has recommended strongly that the administration of mental health programs be moved to Regional Health Authorities and we believe that transition must begin immediately,” says Alliance Chair Dennis Anderson. “Starting with the first Alberta Mental Health Board appointed in 1994, attempts have been made to accomplish what the Mazankowski report has recommended. Now is the time for action! Another major report has confirmed the appropriate direction for reform. Further delays will undermine mental health care,” he said.

“There are many issues that must be sensitively dealt with. We believe that much work has been done by the RHAs and the AMHB and that with assistance from the Alliance and others, reform can be accomplished in the best interest of those suffering from Mental Illness,” Anderson said.

Earlier reports that staff transfer would cost about 62 million dollars are not supported by the three-year old mental health Alliance. “We understand that options exist for staff transfers which would not incur significant severance cost. In addition, Mazankowski suggests that reducing duplicate bureaucratic layers would save significant dollars. We believe this to be true,” said Anderson.

The Alliance has appointed a governance sub-committee chaired by a Past President of the Psychologists’ Association of Alberta and the coalition’s Vice-Chair, George Lucki. “Our committee is developing a list of all issues that need to be resolved in order to ensure that clients, families, and stakeholder groups are integral to the success of the transition. The human resource requirement of the reformed system must be maintained and enhanced to meet the mental health needs of all Albertans,” he said.

Members of the sub-committee are: Executive Director of the Psychiatric Nurses’ Association Barbara Lowe; Psychiatrist Dr. Brian Bishop; Sharon Sutherland, Past President, Schizophrenia Society of Alberta; Dr. Margaret Shim, representing the Alberta Association of Registered Occupational Therapists; Executive Director of the Boyle Street Co-op Hope Hunter; and Dennis Anderson, Alliance Chair and a Past President of the Canadian Mental Health Association (Alberta Division).

The Alliance, the largest organization of its kind in Canada, has offered the work of its sub-committee to any transition team.

## **BACKGROUNDERS**

On [www.mentalhealthalliance.ab.ca](http://www.mentalhealthalliance.ab.ca)

- *Mental Health Governance* – AAMIMH
- *Good People . . . Good Practices . . . No System* – AAMIMH

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

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