



For Immediate Release, January 30, 2008

MINISTER HANCOCK SUPPORTS VOICE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

EDMONTON – There is some good news for Albertans living with mental illness, as the Government of Alberta has agreed to help fund an important voice for mental health and illness in Alberta.

The Alberta Alliance on Mental Health and Mental Illness announced today that it has received sustaining funding for three years from the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

The Alliance is a coalition of groups representing those living with mental illness, provincial organizations providing support services and professional bodies concerned with mental illness and mental health issues. Founded in 1999, by a dedicated group of volunteers with ongoing support from the Alberta Division of Canadian Mental Health, the Alliance advocates for a better quality of life for those living with mental illness. It provides a strong and effective voice on mental health/illness issues and most recently was active in contributing to the dialogue in the recently passed amendments to the Alberta Mental Health Act presented in Bill 31.

Alliance President Sharon Sutherland was very pleased to receive the much-needed financial support: “Funding the Alliance in this way demonstrates this government’s commitment to the consultation process with the mental health community. This will certainly assist our volunteer representatives to see that community services for the mentally ill are accessible and available for all, and that remedies can be found for where gaps or deficiencies are recognized.”

As per a letter from Health and Wellness Minister Dave Hancock, the grant will be for \$253,500 over three years. It will allow the organization to add a staff person and some administrative support.

“This funding is critical to our survival,” said Sutherland. “It was becoming increasingly difficult relying solely on volunteered time and membership fees.”

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Alberta Association of
Services for Children
and Families

Alberta College of
Social Workers

Alberta Network for
Mental Health
(Fellowship)

Alberta Psychiatric
Association

Canadian Mental
Health Association

College of Registered
Psychiatric Nurses of
Alberta

Psychologists’
Association of Alberta

Schizophrenia Society
of Alberta

Society of Alberta
Occupational
Therapists

The Organization for
Bipolar Affective
Disorders Society
(OBAD)