



## ANNOUNCEMENT

### New CEO of Mental Health Research Canada (MHRC) to advance mental health research on behalf of all Canadians

TORONTO, May 27, 2019 – “On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Akela Peoples as the new Chief Executive Officer of Mental Health Research Canada. Our Board was searching for and found a dynamic, creative and results-driven leader who can transform and build MHRC,” says John Trainor, Chair of MHRC Board of Directors. “We are all tremendously pleased that our organization is preparing for national growth with Akela as our new CEO. She is committed to advancing mental health research to improve the lives of Canadians, and our Board is inspired by her passion, vision and impressive track record.”

“Mental health research is critical for the well-being of Canadians and our country,” says Ms. Peoples. “One in five Canadians will experience a mental health issue in any given year and, by age 40, that number increases to one in two Canadians. This week, more than 500,000 employed Canadians will be unable to work due to mental health issues and, today, 11 Canadian will die by suicide.”

Mental illness affects people of all ages, education, income levels and cultures; it impacts all Canadians at some point, whether directly or indirectly through a family member, friend or colleague. In addition to the emotional toil it takes, mental illness costs the Canadian economy a minimum of \$50 billion a year.

MHRC is committed to funding mental health research that engages stakeholders to produce outcomes for practical application. Real-world application can and will make a difference in the lives of Canadians.

Ms. Peoples, who serves on the Board of Governors of Humber College in Ontario, has a distinguished track record of strategically leading and successfully growing other national charities. She is committed to building bridges and relationships to unify and strengthen communities and indeed Canada at large. She views collaboration and partnership as important pillars to fulfil MHRC’s vision of ensuring a Canada with the best mental health for all.

A values-driven, impact-focused leader, Ms. Peoples has twice been awarded the WXN Top 100: Canada's Most Powerful Women award, as well as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and the YWCA Award of Distinction.

As a not-for-profit organization, MHRC has evolved from the Ontario Mental Health Foundation (OMHF), which over a 10-year period invested \$34 million to fund 332 mental health research projects. Now in its second year, MHRC is a national organization that, under Ms. Peoples' leadership, will expand its reach across Canada to realize its vision. The Board is also national in scope, with distinguished members from across the country.

This year, MHRC is funding 10 innovative research projects in important fields such as maternal mental health and schizophrenia. (For more information, visit [www.mhrc.ca](http://www.mhrc.ca).)

"All Canadians should have the opportunity to live life fully and achieve their potential. But without mental health, there is no health," says Ms. Peoples. "I am honoured to be leading this organization to make a difference in the lives of Canadians."

For more information, please contact Barbara Kelly, Communications Coordinator, at 416-497-1429 ext. 404 or [barbarak@mhrc.ca](mailto:barbarak@mhrc.ca).