



## NEWS RELEASE

### Pharmacists' Association Applauds Government's Commitment to Tackling Mental Health and Addictions

**April 2, 2018 (St. John's, NL)** The Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) is pleased with the provincial government's recent announcement of expanded community-based services and a new mental health and addictions facility through Budget 2018.

"With half of Canadians experiencing a mental illness at some point in their lives, enhanced support for mental health and addictions is more critical now than ever," said Steve Gillingham, PANL President. "PANL is supportive of government's commitment to tackling this issue through their new approach to supporting those patients suffering from mental illness and addictions."

Mr. Gillingham went on to note the many ways in which pharmacists – the most accessible care providers, situated in most communities and available extended hours and without appointment - can play a vital role in the government's 'community-centric' approach to mental health and addictions.

"As the most accessible health care providers, pharmacists can and do play a key role in supporting individuals with mental illnesses and addictions. In fact, in many cases we are their first point of contact with the health care system," added Mr. Gillingham.

Specifically, pharmacists currently support those suffering from mental health illnesses and addictions in a number of ways, including:

- Participating in methadone and suboxone treatment programs,
- Educating patients about the safe and appropriate use of opioids for pain management,
- Providing smoking cessation (including the prescribing and monitoring of quit medications),

- Educating mental health clients about their psychiatric medications and working with the patient and their physician to promote and improve adherence,
- Serving as an advocate for mental health and addictions clients re changes to the NLPDP drug plan as appropriate.

PANL is the voice of pharmacists, with membership including over 700 pharmacists, 160 pharmacy students and 150 pharmacies. PANL advocates for pharmacists as health care team members integral to the effective and efficient delivery of health services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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