



STATEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON MENTAL HEALTH and Non-Violent CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL

Recognizing that:

- police officers and other first responders are often the first people to contact individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis and that police are often called upon to convey individuals to appropriate facilities for psychiatric assessment under the *Mental Health Act*;
- appropriate training of first responders in mental health issues and non-violent crisis intervention will benefit the well-being and safety of everyone;
- some police services already provide significant mental health and non-violent crisis intervention training for their officers;
- currently in British Columbia there are no province wide standards for the uniform provision of mental health and non-violent crisis intervention training for law enforcement personnel, nor is adequate funding provided to police agencies specifically for this training;
- several juries at Coroners' Inquests have recommended training for police officers in more effective and humane ways of interacting with people with mental illnesses, especially when in crisis';
- individuals with a mental illness or substance misuse problems come from many different cultural backgrounds, including First Nations communities; and
- law enforcement personnel would benefit from a standardized culturally competent mental health and non-violent crisis intervention training based on best practice;

The following organizations call upon the British Columbia Ministry of Public Safety and the Solicitor General to require and to provide funding for the immediate development of standardized mental health and non-violent crisis intervention training based on a best practices model to be implemented in all police services and other first responders operating in the province of British Columbia:

- BC Alliance on Mental Health/Illness and Addictions
- BC Civil Liberties Association
- BC Criminal Justice Association
- BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
- Canadian Mental Health Association – BC Division
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Courtenay Branch



- Canadian Mental Health Association – Kelowna & District Branch
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Prince George Branch
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Richmond Branch
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Shuswap/Revelstoke Branch
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Vernon & District Branch
- Community Legal Assistance Society
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
- John Howard Society of BC
- Kindale Developmental Association
- Mental Illness Family Support & Information Centre – BC Schizophrenia Society
- Shuswap Association for Community Living
- Social Planning Council for the North Okanagan
- St. James Community Service Society

^{i i} Coroner's Case No. 2004:177:0008, Majencio Camaso, February 25, 2005
Coroner's Case No. 2004-191-0030, Joseph Pagnotta, November 10, 2004
Coroner's Case No. 1999:230:0961, Donald Mayer, October 6, 2000.
Coroner's Case No. 95-175-0036, Maria Barcelos Amaral, October 22, 1995.