

For their
broken lives, a
broken promise

B.C. to spend \$125 million to get mentally ill off streets

May 2, 2000

The Honorable Michael Farnworth
Ministry of Health
and Ministry Responsible for Seniors
PO Box 9050 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC
V8W 9E2

Dear Honorable Mr. Farnworth,

I am writing to urge you to keep the government's promise and provide the funding mental health services truly deserve. The Mental Health Plan is not just a paper document, it represents the lives of thousands of British Columbians.

In 1998, one of your predecessors instituted the Mental Health Plan, promising 125 million new dollars over seven years to get mental health services back on track. However, three years have passed and your government is already 43 million dollars short of the 1998 promise with no firm commitment for the future. The lack of funding is reflected across BC in inadequate services and crises for people with mental illness and their families.

One in five British Columbians has a mental illness. Mental illnesses account for the second-highest number of days spent in hospital by patients. Please, take our call to action and recognize that mental health services are vital to a healthy British Columbia. Recognize it by fulfilling the 1998 promise and providing the 114 million dollars left for the Mental Health Plan.

Sincerely,

Signature _____
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▼ MENTAL HEALTH
**Advocates
urge quick
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of money**
By Judith Lavoie
Times Colonist staff

The provincial government's pledge of \$125 million to get the mentally ill off the streets was just an empty promise. The money was pledged two years ago but never approved. "One of the challenges of this is while it was announced, it was never in a budget," said Penny Prid- dy, the former health minister. "There wasn't budget approval."

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Mr. Colin Hansen
Member of the Legislative Assembly
5640 Dunbar Street
Vancouver, BC
V6N 1W7

Dear Mr. Hansen,

In your role as the Health Critic, we are asking you to raise awareness on a broken promise unfulfilled by the NDP government.

In 1998, the government instituted the Mental Health Plan, promising 125 million new dollars over seven years to get mental health services back on track. However, three years have passed and the plan is already 43 million dollars short of the 1998 promise with no firm commitment for the future. The lack of funding is reflected across BC in inadequate services and crises for people with mental illness and their families.

One in five British Columbians has a mental illness. Mental illnesses account for the second-highest number of days spent in hospital by patients. As the Health Critic please make this a top priority on your agenda by recognizing that mental health services are vital to a healthy British Columbia. Make sure that the Minister of Health knows that thousands of British Columbians will not accept the present status quo.

Sincerely,

Signature

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Advocates urge quick allocation of money

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