

## **Important Step Forward for Provincial Mental Health Strategy**

The Mental Health Coalition of Nova Scotia welcomes today's news about the Oversight Committee to guide the development of a provincial mental health strategy. The Minister of Health announced the names of all the Committee members.

“This truly is a milestone day for mental health in Nova Scotia,” according to Gail Gardiner who is a Co-Chair of the Coalition. “We have been waiting for all the members of the Oversight Committee to be named since it was first announced by the Minister on June 1.” Ms. Gardiner is the Executive Director of the Canadian Mental Health Association – Nova Scotia Division.

Coalition Co-Chair Joan Jessome also welcomed this news. “We are ready and able to assist the Oversight Committee as it seeks to engage Nova Scotians in its vital work. Mental health is long overdue for such a strategy.” Ms. Jessome is the President of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union.

Both Ms. Gardiner and Ms. Jessome emphasized that the Coalition is willing to do all it can to collaborate with the Committee. As a starting-point, the Coalition is revamping its website to assist the Committee in obtaining the comments and suggestions of concerned Nova Scotians. They are hoping to meet with the Committee Chairs Dr. Michael Ungar and Ms. Joyce MacDonald in the near future.

The Mental Health Coalition of Nova Scotia is a non-partisan group of over 200 concerned individuals and organizations who want to raise the priority of mental health issues on the government agenda and who want to end the chronic underfunding of mental health services.