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Abstract Submitted by the Health Promotion Affiliate, Canadian Health Network

TITLE: Mental Health Promotion: within the organization and beyond

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ABSTRACT BODY:

Purpose Mental Health Promotion (MHP) shares all key elements of health promotion, with the added emphasis on mental health outcomes and strategies aimed at people with mental illness. The purpose of this study was to conduct an environmental scan of MHP activity in Ontario, Canada to understand current issues in the field and their relationships to both inclusion and the social determinants of health (DOH). Methodology A review of MHP literature was conducted to identify themes of inclusion and DOH. Key informant interviews were conducted to determine organizational perspectives of current trends, practices and gaps in the field. The five action areas of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion were used as an organizing principle to identify exemplary MHP programs. A content analysis approach was used for interview analysis. Results The literature review revealed several examples of MHP programs across Ontario addressing DOH and/or inclusion. Themes from the interviews included the need to: a) establish clearer concepts in MHP; b) explicitly link MHP to the DOH; c) distinguish MHP from service delivery; d) identify MHP activities that are often not identified as MHP; e) mobilize organizations in support of a stronger commitment to MHP. Conclusion MHP practices are critical yet are often unidentified. The challenge is to develop a common understanding and application of MHP that links to DOH issues and inclusion. Internationally, mental health and MHP have recently become priority issues; it is time for collaborative action across organizations to move the MHP agenda forward provincially and nationally.