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News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Starbucks Canada Launches Unprecedented Mental Health Benefit
Company commits to 10 times increase in mental health benefits to \$5,000 per year

Toronto, ON – Starbucks Canada announced today that starting October 1, 2016 it will be increasing its mental health benefits to \$5,000 per year for all eligible employees, who work a minimum of 20 hours per week, and their dependents. This represents among the highest mental health benefits offered at any company in Canada across all industries. According to a study by Morneau Shepell, one-in-three working Canadians report having, or having had, a mental health condition such as depression or an anxiety disorder. Starbucks commitment comes at a critical time when immediate action is required to support mental health treatment in Canada.

“At Starbucks we care about our partners, and from the very start of our company we have been an industry leader in benefits. Last year we held open forums across the country with our partners and heard first-hand that receiving mental health support is important to them,” said Sara Presutto, vice president, human resources, Starbucks Canada. “The statistics are very clear that mental health is an important issue that is affecting many Canadians. We do not believe the current level of support for mental health benefits provided by Canadian employers is sufficient and we encourage all companies in Canada to step up and join this important effort.”

With the average age of Starbucks employees being 24, the company is a leading employer for young people. This is an important age where early intervention can help ensure a healthy future. Up to 75 per cent of mental health problems have an age of onset occurring in childhood, adolescence or young adulthood. The prevalence of mental health problems and illnesses among emerging adults rises progressively as they transition to adulthood and peaks by the time they reach 29 years of age. It is estimated that of the 1.2 million Canadian children and youth affected by mental illness, less than 20 per cent will receive appropriate treatment. In fact, the mental health and wellbeing of emerging adults during this time of life predicts good or poor health late into adulthood.

“Given most adults spend more of their waking hours at work than anywhere else – and with many youth holding at least part-time jobs – addressing issues of mental health at work is vitally important,” said Louise Bradley, President and CEO of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. “The progressive action taken today by Starbucks Canada demonstrates leadership and sets a bar to which all employers can aspire.”

Mental health is a complex issue and many different solutions are required to treat dramatically varying needs. Mental health can be affected by bereavement, changing life stages, caring for elderly parents, dealing with illnesses such as depression and anxiety, among many more factors. The company’s enhanced benefit will add significant access to psychological and social worker services for its workforce.



Most employer support for mental health covers the cost of three to four counselling sessions without recovery or mitigation, whereas a \$5,000 benefit will allow for longer-term treatment.

At the same time, Starbucks is continuing its long-term commitment to providing part-time employees, working a minimum of 20 hours per week, with “full-time” benefits including; health, dental, tuition reimbursements, company stocks, future savings, career and personal support services. The company also offers an Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) to all employees which provides mental health support, including short-term services.

About Mental Health Commission of Canada

The Mental Health Commission of Canada is a catalyst for change. We are collaborating with hundreds of partners to change the attitudes of people in Canada toward mental health problems and to improve services and supports. Our goal is to help people who live with mental health problems and illnesses lead meaningful and productive lives. Together we create change. The Mental Health Commission of Canada is funded by Health Canada.

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About Starbucks

Since 1971, Starbucks Coffee Company has been committed to ethically sourcing and roasting high-quality *arabica* coffee. Today, with stores around the globe, the company is the premier roaster and retailer of specialty coffee in the world. Through our unwavering commitment to excellence and our guiding principles, we bring the unique Starbucks Experience to life for every customer through every cup. To share in the experience, please visit us in our stores or online at www.starbucks.ca and the Starbucks Newsroom at www.news.starbucks.com.

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