



**NEWS RELEASE**

**Number of days to election: 30**

**Number of Ontarians demanding funding parity for**

**mental health: 10,000+**

Sault Ste. Marie May 7, 2018 – If there’s one simple thing you can do for Mental Health Week (May 7-13), it's join the 10,000 other Ontarians who’ve signed CMHA’s online petition urging political parties to fund mental health and addictions care like physical health care.

With a provincial election one month away, now is a crucial time to add your voice and demand funding parity. Visit [erasethedifference.ca](http://www.erasethedifference.ca) and sign the petition.

“We all know someone who’s been touched by mental health issues. Whether it’s you, a family member, friend or colleague,” said Lisa Carricato, Mental Health Educator CMHA Sault Ste. Marie “Do you want to see a mental health system that is stronger and more responsive to those seeking help? Then make your voice heard. Sign the petition and let candidates know that this issue will influence your vote.”

CMHA branches across Ontario are participating in the Erase the Difference campaign because they’ve seen first-hand how the mental health and addictions system is struggling to keep up with demand for service.

Despite evidence of the heavy burden of mental illness on society, the mental health and addictions sector has always been chronically underfunded compared to other parts of the health system.

Last year, for example, Ontario devoted just 6.5 per cent ($3.5 billion) of a total $54-billion health budget to mental health and addictions.

The good news is that so far in the pre-election campaign, political parties have made mental health and addictions care a key issue with funding announcements or platform commitments.

Also the community is encouraged to take part in the many Mental Health events that are planned for the week.

Here’s a list of Events:

Monday, May 7th beginning at 1:00 pm we are walking for mental health to kick off Mental Health Week! This will mark the first Mood Walks of the spring season. We will start at CMHA Sault Ste. Marie, 386 Queen Street East and walk Queen Street, sporting our green shirts tying green ribbons on the light posts. Refreshments will be served after the walk.

Tuesday May 8th and Thursday, May 10th we will be kicking off our promotion to Ride Don’t Hide at both branches of TD Canada Trust from 10:00 am -2:00 pm each day with our TD Riders! Ride Don’t Hide is a national fund raising and awareness event – more information at [www.ridedonthide.com](http://www.ridedonthide.com)

AFS’s “The Sky’s the Limit” Concert at The Tech, 130 Wellington Street East is on Thursday, May 10th from 7:00 to 9:00.

“The Sky’s the Limit” 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament at Sault College Health & Wellness Centre is Saturday, May 12th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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