

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Supports General Direction of Special Committee on Non-Medical Use of Drugs Interim Report

December 9, 2002 (Toronto) For immediate release: The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) supports the general direction of the House of Commons Special Committee on Non-Medical Use of Drugs interim report. CAMH is particularly pleased to see the emphasis the Committee placed on addiction as a health issue and the need to address it within a health care framework.

Dr. Patrick Smith, Vice-President, Clinical Programs, CAMH, and Head of Addiction Psychiatry at the University of Toronto, commented, "We strongly support the Committee's emphasis on harm reduction and the development of a national drug strategy. CAMH supports a national drug strategy led by Health Canada to ensure an overall framework that recognizes addiction as a health issue. We agree that this strategy should be one that recognizes the four "pillars" – treatment, harm reduction, prevention and enforcement and it must define the roles and accountabilities of various ministries and governments. CAMH also supports the need for more research in the area of addiction and substance abuse to ensure that policies are based on scientific evidence and experience. We also applaud the Committee for their recognition of the importance of increasing funding for health-based public awareness, prevention and education campaigns."

"As a partner in Canada's first Drug Treatment Court, we applaud the commitment and support for permanent funding and expansion of drug courts, if indicated by evaluation outcomes. The Centre is pleased that the Committee has recognized the need for more funding for treatment, a broader continuum of treatment options and the need to be sensitive to socioeconomic, gender and cultural diversity," said Dr. Smith.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health is the largest mental health and addiction facility in Canada and is fully affiliated with the University of Toronto and the World Health Organization.

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Dr. Patrick Smith, Vice-President Clinical Programs at CAMH, and Head of Addiction Psychiatry at the University of Toronto is available for media interviews. Please contact Anne Ptaszniak, CAMH Media Relations Coordinator, at 416-595-6015.