

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NEW PAPER HIGHLIGHTS IMPACT OF ADHD ON CANADIAN ECONOMY**

*Awareness Week is October 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> and CADDAC is asking all Canadians to Get Real, Get Informed and Recognize the COST of ADHD*

**MARKHAM, ON - October 14, 2013** – To mark ADHD Awareness Week, the Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC) unveiled a new Canadian paper that demonstrates the far-reaching economic impact of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The research shows that the disorder impacts Canadian society well beyond its effect on individuals and their families, with a significant effect on human and social capital, on increased socioeconomic costs for Canada, on increased costs to healthcare, education, labour and social services, and on increased costs to the justice system. The paper was sent to provincial and federal legislative representatives across Canada this past summer.

“What we need to know is that the continued misinformation and undeserved stigma that haunts ADHD increases the continuing costs that under diagnosis and under treatment fuel,” says Heidi Bernhardt, President and Executive Director at CADDAC.

The paper reviews some of the known costs of ADHD and indicates where the Canadian and provincial governments are affected by ongoing significant long-term costs.

Highlights include:

- Canada loses an estimated \$6 billion to \$11 billion annually through loss of workplace productivity.
- The Canadian cost of illness extrapolated at over \$7 billion, exceeds the cost of major depressive disorders.
- Individuals with ADHD are more likely to enter the workforce as unskilled or semi-skilled workers; have greater periods of unemployment; change jobs more frequently; and earn considerably less money over their lifetime.
- There is a direct correlation in terms of increasing healthcare costs.
- The impact of ADHD on Canadian social services continues to escalate.

Mark Stabile, Director of the School of Public Policy and Professor at the Rotman School, U of T, comments on the paper “ADHD really does affect a large number of children. As the report shows, the consequences, in terms of their ability to do well in school and then lead productive lives are really quite substantial.”

Dr. Rosemary Tannock, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Special Education, University of Toronto & Senior Scientist, Neuroscience & Mental Health Research Program, The Hospital for Sick Children builds on Mark’s comment by saying,

"The fiscal impact of this prevalent and impairing neurodevelopmental condition (ADHD) is largely attributable to the lower educational attainment in this population, which increases the risk for a lifetime of decreased quality of life, increased health problems and reduced earnings, and hence increased societal costs. National and provincial investment in educational intervention in ADHD that allows more youngsters with ADHD to achieve their educational potential will improve their quality of life and societal contributions, thereby yielding a positive rate of return."

And while medical research on ADHD continues to make great strides, ADHD continues to be the most under-recognized, yet treatable psychiatric disorder in Canada. Results from a recent general population survey, reveal that there are still too many knowledge gaps when it comes to the disorder.

In fact, most Canadians don't *GET* ADHD, with only 12 per cent of survey respondents indicating that a child presenting with 'hyperactive/impulsive symptoms' may have ADHD. Instead, 27 per cent believe that parents employ poor discipline, 18 per cent suggest insufficient physical exercise and 17 per cent believe it is a result of being over-tired.

Other survey findings include:

- 36 per cent of Canadians FALSELY believe that children outgrow ADHD.
- Regrettably ONLY 40 per cent of Canadians think that a person with ADHD can be successful at home, work and school with proper support.
- Even worse, the 20 per cent who feel that the person with ADHD will always struggle could be right IF proper treatment is not available.

This continued lack of understanding of ADHD perpetuates the under diagnosis and treatment of ADHD; up to 90 per cent of adults with the disorder remain untreated; and feeds the continued stigma and isolation of families dealing with ADHD.

"As well as supporting and advocating for families with ADHD, our goal as an organization is to continually drive the ADHD discussion in the general public as well as all levels of government," says Heidi Bernhardt. "We know that the significant impacts of the disorder are not being taken into account by our governments, so during ADHD Awareness Week, CADDAC is asking families and individuals to let their government know that ADHD is an important issue for them. Helpful advice on how to do this can be found on the ADHD Awareness Week web site, [adhdawarenessweek.ca](http://adhdawarenessweek.ca)."

**CADDAC AND ADHD ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS CANADA ARE SUPPORTING THE SOCIOECONOMIC PAPER WANT ACTION FOR ADHD.**

They believe that when governments invest in the provision of adequate diagnostic, and multimodal treatments for ADHD, substantial economic and social benefits will follow.

As a next step, CADDAC is asking for:

- Health Ministries across the country formally recognize ADHD as a developmental and health risk.
- Education as well as Training, University and College Ministries recognize ADHD as a developmental and academic risk.
- Justice and Corrections Ministries recognize ADHD as a risk to becoming involved in the justice system and continuing as repeat offenders.
- Ministry of Labour and employment recognize ADHD as a risk factor for unemployment and under employment
- Ministries of Social Service recognize that untreated ADHD can impact their costs

### **ABOUT ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)**

Affecting over one million Canadians, ADHD is the most prevalent childhood mental health disorders in the country. It is not gender specific<sup>i</sup> and affects both children and adults. Those with ADHD need not be defined by the disorder. While there is no cure, most people who manage their ADHD with appropriate treatments can be successful in school, work and relationships, and live productive lives.

### **ABOUT CADDAC**

CADDAC is a national not-for-profit organization that provides leadership in education, awareness and advocacy for ADHD organizations and individuals with ADHD across Canada. CADDAC provides a wide-range of information for , parents, adults, children/adolescents, educators and health care providers on its website, [www.caddac.ca](http://www.caddac.ca), as well as information on our up-coming conference and future educational events.

For more information on ADHD Awareness Week, visit [www.adhdawarenessweek.ca](http://www.adhdawarenessweek.ca) or to read the white paper, please visit: [www.caddac.ca](http://www.caddac.ca)

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Ethan Pigott  
Spectrum Advisors  
416-558-2783  
[ethan.pigott@spectrumadvisors.ca](mailto:ethan.pigott@spectrumadvisors.ca)

Heidi Bernhard  
National Director  
CADDAC  
[heidi.bernhardt@caddac.ca](mailto:heidi.bernhardt@caddac.ca)  
Phone: 905-471-3524

**REFERENCES**

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<sup>i</sup> CADDAC. [www.caddac.ca/cms/page.php?67](http://www.caddac.ca/cms/page.php?67)