



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Sunnybrook launches *Let's Face This* campaign
to confront the stigma of mental illness**

***Psychiatrists at Sunnybrook estimate 1 in 3 Canadians
will be personally affected by mental illness in their lifetime***

TORONTO, October 6, 2008 –Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre today launched *Let's Face This – Confront the Stigma of Mental Illness*, an innovative web-based initiative to address the growing public health issue. Psychiatrists at Sunnybrook now estimate that mental illness personally affects more than 10 million Canadians.

Developed in partnership with Manulife Financial, the campaign website, letsfacethis.ca, offers visitors the opportunity to post their photo and message on a virtual campaign tree. With each new photo added, the tree will grow, symbolizing growing awareness, education, fundraising and hope for those suffering from a mental illness.

“Even with all the knowledge available today, mental illness is still a very difficult topic for the majority of people to discuss,” said Dr. Anthony Levitt, Chief of Psychiatry at Sunnybrook. “*Let's Face This* will help us to work together to confront the stigma surrounding mental illness. And just as importantly, it will help raise much needed funds for research that will lead to finding the causes of mental illness and developing new treatments.”

A grassroots campaign designed to help raise awareness, education and funds for mental health research, the campaign coincides with Mental Illness Awareness Week, taking place from October 5 – 11. In addition to the website, teams of photographers will hit the streets of Toronto, collecting photos and messages and providing information about mental illness. There will also be promotional activities with local community associations and on online social media such as Facebook.

“Manulife Financial is proud to partner with Sunnybrook on this campaign to help educate Canadians about mental illness and reduce the stigma associated with it,” says Paul Rooney, President & CEO, Manulife Canada. “And by making a donation, individuals can support world-class mental health research that offers hope for better understanding of mental illness and the development of new treatments.”

-30-

A Public Health Crisis:

- **Nearly 1 in 3** Canadians will be affected by mental illness during their lifetimes
- **46%** of the population think people use the term “mental illness” as an excuse for bad behaviour
- **1 in 4** is fearful of being around those who suffer from serious mental illness
- **3 in 5** think the number of people with mental illnesses will increase in the next 10 years
- **3 in 10** agree that mental illness is hurting Canada’s economy
- **4 in 5** think many people suffer from undiagnosed mental illness
- **3 in 5** agree that diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses is underfunded

Source: 8th Annual National Report Card on Health Care (Aug. 2008), Canadian Medical Association

Let’s face this and confront the stigma together.

About Sunnybrook’s Neurosciences Program

Sunnybrook is restoring healthy minds and brains. Their world-class Neurosciences program uniquely integrates psychiatry, neurology, and geriatrics into one of Canada’s leading centres for the treatment of mood and anxiety disorders, stroke, brain tumors, and dementias such as Alzheimer’s.

Sunnybrook physicians and researchers:

- lead in the interdisciplinary approach to brain and mental disorders
- have clinical and research expertise in mood and anxiety disorders, neurodegenerative disorders, brain tumors and traumatic brain injury
- oversee the largest mood disorders clinic for adolescents in Canada
- work daily to de-stigmatize brain disorders and mental illness
- share their expertise with others throughout North America and the world

About Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre is inventing the future of health care for the one million patients the hospital cares for each year through the dedication of its more than 10,000 staff and volunteers. An internationally recognized leader in research and education and a full affiliation with the University of Toronto distinguishes Sunnybrook as one of Canada’s premier academic health sciences centres. Sunnybrook specializes in caring for Canada’s war veterans, high-risk pregnancies, critically-ill newborns, adults and the elderly, and treating and preventing cancer, cardiovascular disease, neurological disorders, orthopaedic and arthritic conditions and traumatic injuries.

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