**[DATE]**

Dear Prime Minster Trudeau **[OR YOUR MP]:**

**RE: National Day of Collaboration for Brain Injury Services & Supports**

We invite you to participate in our National Day of Collaboration for Brain Injury Services & Supports on Wednesday, June 5, 2019 in Ottawa (location to be announced). The National Day of Collaboration will take place coast-to-coast across Canada to advocate for improving the quality of life for brain injury survivors by providing integrated services (brain injury rehabilitation, mental health and addiction) which an individual can access when needed, in the way needed, where they are needed, and for however long they are needed.

In Canada, there are 1.5 million Canadians living with the outcome of a brain injury. Sadly, a minimum of 166,455 new brain injuries (456 per day/ 1 every 3 minutes) will be added to the number of people requiring services and supports. Here are some important stats in understanding the magnitude of the problem in our country:

* **Homelessness:** In 2013, CBC reported that approximately 30,000 Canadians were homeless on any given night and that ***200,000 are homeless per year***. According to the Toronto study, 53% of the homeless have a traumatic brain injury (Hwang, 2008) and that 70% of the 53% became homeless AFTER suffering their FIRST brain injury. The mental health issues and addiction struggles of those the homeless are directly linked to brain injury.
* **Correctional Facilities** – Canada has 53 correctional facilities, housing approximately 40,147 individuals. John Simpson’s study revealed that 80% of those incarcerated ***(over 32,000 of those incarcerated in Canada)*** have suffered a brain injury and 60% of those identified sustained their FIRST brain injury as a child and often at the hand of abuse. Upon release into our communities, and when appropriate during incarceration, these individuals require brain injury rehabilitation, mental health and addiction services, housing, and employment training for a successful integration into our community.
* **Opioid crisis.** In Canada, there are 11 fatal overdoses every day! That is over ***8,000 senseless deaths since 2016***. Although safe injection sites and naloxone kits are valuable in addressing the situation, they are band-aids for the problem. It is known that a person with a brain injury has a 400% risk of increased mental health issues and a 200% risk of addiction issue. The police are frontline workers are dealing with these individuals daily, with little or no training in brain injury, mental health or addiction issues. A person with a brain injury, mental health and addiction issues is considered complex and often, denied access to services. This is perpetuating the problem!

We need action by way of integrating services to ensure community supports are in place, and complex clients, such as those with a brain injury, receive interventions as early as possible and for the time they need them.

To date, brain injury has been tucked in with other organizations and funding requests or abandoned altogether. The problem is that brain injury is directly linked to these social problems and if not included in the conversation, a community, province, or country will never have a 100% solution.

Our communities, province’s and Canada are already spending millions to address the problem but not hitting the mark. We can pay now, or we can pay later and as we are seeing now, the cost later is a much greater impact than anticipated. The only way to do this differently is to come together and ensure that federal and provincial funding is in place to exclusively deal with brain injury. The benefit will be that the numbers of people on the street, in the prisons, and suffering from mental health and addiction issues will start to reduce. People will feel supported, have the opportunity to heal, and return to work or meaningful activity in their community. We can give people the quality of life they deserve.

We look forward to you being a part of the conversation and joining us on June 5, 2019.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at **[YOUR PHONE NUMBER]** or by email at **[YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS]**.

Sincerely,

**[YOUR NAME]
[YOUR TITLE]**