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PRESS RELEASE

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Albertans have spoken up for mental health funding

June 3, 2021 – Edmonton, AB – A request for the Alberta government to provide provincially funded psychological services for all Albertans met a milestone last week.

The Expert Psychologists Interagency Clinical (EPIC) network began lobbying the government in late 2019 with a petition advocating for accessible, provincially funded psychological services for all Albertans. On May 26, 2021, the petition was tabled in the Legislative Assembly showcasing the support of over 10,000 Albertans for funded and accessible mental health care.

The EPIC initiative stresses the importance of making expert mental health resources accessible to all Albertans. Read the full petition on the EPIC website at www.epicpsychology.net.

Through the petition, EPIC is asking the Government of Alberta to allow psychologists to bill Alberta Health directly for psychological interventions. Their premise is that psychological supports should function like good medical care. Albertans have funded access to self-selected family physicians for their physical health needs. It is equally essential for Albertans to have funded access to self-selected psychologists as an ongoing resource for their mental health needs.

“The volume of support for our petition, not just in Alberta, but across Canada and the world just goes to show how vital accessible, funded mental health care is. We are in the middle of a mental health crisis, and it’s only going to escalate if we cannot meet the mental health intervention needs of our entire population,” said EPIC founder and registered psychologist, Janet Ryan-Newell. “Even before the pandemic, the medical model, mental health care system was significantly overextended. Now, as psychologists, we are increasingly concerned for the mental health of Albertans,” she continued. The petition received over nearly 21,000 signatures from supporters throughout Canada the world.

EPIC is eager to resume conversation, with the current government, about adequately addressing the escalating mental health issues of Albertans by providing financially supported access to both the private and public systems.

The EPIC Network agencies include Kells Counselling, Insight Psychological, Dreamcatcher Nature Assisted Therapy, and Cornerstone Counselling. EPIC is a grassroots group representing over 60 private psychologists in Alberta. They work together to promote the benefits of psychology in the Edmonton area and help all Albertans access psychological care.