

**Standard Life Centre for Breakthroughs
in Teen Depression and Suicide Prevention
The Douglas Institute will contribute to the hope to save lives**

Montréal, Wednesday, October 5, 2011 – The Douglas Mental Health University Institute announced the creation of the Standard Life Centre for Breakthroughs in Teen Depression and Suicide Prevention. Standard Life will invest one million dollars into this centre, which will be directed by child psychiatrist Dr. Johanne Renaud. The Centre's mission will be to improve youth's access to mental health services and evaluate the efficacy of different treatments for depression and prevention methods for depression and suicide in Canadian youth. This gift from Standard Life is the largest corporate investment in Canada dedicated entirely to prevention of depression and suicide in Canadian youth.

Suicide is the second leading cause of mortality among Canadian teenagers – following road accidents – and it is an important public health issue. It affects hundreds of families each year. Depression is a factor involved in more than 70 % of cases of youth suicide. Depression will affect approximately 17 % of adolescents at some point before they reach adulthood.

The work that will be carried out by the Standard Life Centre will not only benefit the young patients of the Douglas, but also many adolescents throughout Canada.

Reinforcing existing methods to save lives

Throughout the world, researchers, clinicians, and other health professionals, along with community workers, school administrators and others, are confronted with the challenge posed by adolescent depression and suicide. "It's not about reproducing what is already in place or adding methods of intervention, but about using scientific rigour to establish which existing methods are most effective in preventing depression and suicide in youth. Then, it will be about determining how these interventions, treatments, or therapies can benefit patients in other places in order to reduce the overall rate of depression and suicide in youth," said **Johanne Renaud**, child psychiatrist at the Douglas Institute and the Director of the Standard Life Centre.

"Thanks to existing communication channels, the Standard Life Centre would be able to distribute scientifically-validated educational materials to anyone who could make good use of them. The Centre could also offer training workshops to health care providers, community organizations, and other partners," added Dr. Renaud, whose expertise on youth depression is sought-after around the world.

Developing their full potential to live life to the fullest

Jane Lalonde, the President of the Douglas Institute Foundation, specifies that “we have to act now so that youth can develop their full potential and live life to the fullest. The quicker an adolescent receives appropriate care, the greater his or her chances of recovery”. Usually, there are eight or ten years between the onset of symptoms and the first intervention. “Eight of ten years represent a very long time in the life of a child.” Thanks to this important gift from Standard Life—the largest corporate gift strictly designated to preventing depression and suicide in youth—the Centre will be able to fulfill its mission. “I would like to publically express my gratitude to Standard Life for choosing to invest in young healthy minds.”

“Through our community investment program, Standard Life supports several projects that improve the well-being of Canadian youth. An essential component of this well-being is mental health. For us, this investment represents the hope that we can find scientifically-validated solutions that will ultimately help the greatest possible number of young people,” stated **Joseph Iannicelli**, President and Chief Executive Officer of Standard Life in Canada.

Statements of support

Dr. Abel Ickowicz, President of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Psychiatrist-in-Chief at the Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto, sees the Centre “as an opportunity to connect existing resources in the country, whether they are scientists, healthcare professionals or community workers, and help them work together towards our common goal of helping teenagers. For that initiative, I congratulate the Douglas Institute and I am looking forward to collaborating with Dr Renaud.”

Claude Poirier, Founder and President of Réseau Ado in Québec – affiliated with Youth Net in Ottawa, applauds the creation of the Standard Life Centre. “The Centre will help probably help move the activities of organizations like ours in a common, hopeful direction – to reduce the rate of depression and suicide in youth. This year, Réseau Ado celebrates its tenth year of helping youth and raising awareness about mental health and we know how big the need to do more is.”

Antoine Bertrand, actor and spokesperson for Réseau Ado, sees the Centre as an essential investment that “will help to lessen the taboos that exist towards depression and suicide.”

Dr Boris Birmaher, child psychiatrist and Director of the Child and Adolescent Anxiety Program, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, USA, “In the United States, we face the same challenges in trying to prevent depression and suicide in youth. I know Dr. Renaud’s work as a clinician and research scientist and I am convinced she will bring her exceptional talent and expertise to fruition in the success of this new centre.”

Facts you should know

Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by the age of 14, and three quarters by age 24.

Approximately 17% of adolescents have suffered from clinical depression.

Depression is the leading cause of suicide for Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24.

The average delays between the onset of symptoms and intervention are 8-10 years.

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Please note

A press kit is available upon request.

Please contact the person people for requests for interviews with the people mentioned in this press release.

About the Douglas Institute

The Douglas is an international mental health leader with the capacity to have a major impact on resolving pressing mental health problems. It has a stellar track record of collaboration with a wide variety of stakeholders and has shown repeatedly that it delivers effective and appropriate programs. It was named Montreal's only mental health university institute in 2006 by the Québec government, in recognition of its record in pioneering best practices in mental health, leading in research, innovation, and knowledge transfer in mental health in Québec and beyond.

The Douglas has become, over the last few years, a leading international centre for the study of suicide. It has the only brain bank on suicide completers. The team at the Douglas has investigated causes and provided programs in different communities including the far North.

Information and interview requests:

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Source for Statistics: Douglas Institute and Canadian Community Health Survey: Major Depressive Disorder and Suicidality in Adolescents - L'Enquête sur la santé dans les collectivités canadiennes : trouble dépressif majeur et tendance au suicide chez les adolescents, 2006. Amy H. Cheung, Health Systems Research and Consulting Unit, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre; Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON;
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2585433/>