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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY FOR THE VULNERABLE MUST BE PROTECTED

The Liberals must take a strong stance on advocacy and rights advice for vulnerable Ontarians.

On June 29th, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) announced that the Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario (CMHA) will be taking control of the government's Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office (PPAO). Only a small group has been told about this decision; there has been no public announcement and no consultation. In their report, *Open Minds, Healthy Minds: Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy* the government wrote, "People with lived experiences of mental illness and addictions must have a voice as essential partners in system design, policy development, and program and service provision, and the opportunity to make informed decisions about their personal care and support." (p.9)

This decision is an insult to all who care deeply for the most vulnerable members of society and ignores the need for unbiased support. It contradicts promises and commitments of the current government respecting inclusion and consultation. This government's decision creates a clear and dangerous conflict of interest and is a serious threat to the independence of rights advocacy.

HOW MANY MORE DEATHS NEED TO OCCUR BEFORE THIS GOVERNMENT CARES?

The Coalition for an Independent Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office demands that this decision be rescinded and that the Minister schedule a meeting with the Coalition and other key stakeholders.

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For more information and to set up an interview with the Coalition contact David Gibson (david.gibson@cippao.com)

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<http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/187816391274030?ap=1>

(Psychiatric Patient Advocacy Must Be Independent)