

Comment by Bill Wilkerson
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CivicAction Mental Health Initiative

I applaud [CivicAction](#) for its initiative and, very particularly, Rod Phillips and Rupert Duchesne for their continued leadership in the mental health arena.

An urban setting – Toronto, Hamilton, the GTA - can – with leadership and vision – become a venue for innovation in the actual prevention of risk, disablement, premature death and economic cost associated with mental ill health, particularly depression, globally.

I encourage CivicAction to define its initiative in these terms, and, in doing so, reach out to cities across Canada and beyond our borders. Cities are uniquely-placed to mobilize research institutions, business corporations, governments at every level and NGO agencies, localities and neighborhoods behind a clearly-stated goal.

Mental Health International is working to bring major employers together – both public and private sector including the NGO community (as employers in their own right) – in various capitals to serve a purpose like this, just as our predecessor (the Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Mental Health, of which Mr. Phillips was a founding director) did by creating the US/Canada Forum for Mental Health and Productivity and the Canada Mayor’s National Network for Mental Health to help get the mental health ball rolling in the early 2000s.

The point is this: the mental health crisis is a global issue and when he was Canada’s Ambassador to the US., Honourable Michael Wilson, former Honourary Chair of the Roundtable, said “all the great issues – security, trade, and climate change – demand international solutions. Mental health is among these.”

Toronto and its GTA neighbours rank with all the great cities and can – with the courage of their convictions - shape an international civic agenda to help nullify the spread of mental ill health associated with growing urbanization in the world today.

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