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MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

New resource helps BC workers and businesses to address workplace depression

Science-based self-care manual promotes skills not pills

VANCOUVER – A new, free resource introduced this week by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) will help people and businesses deal with depression and mood problems at work.

“Depression in the workplace results in an enormous degree of disability and significant emotional and financial cost to both employees and employers,” said Minister of Health George Abbott. “It is an encouraging step forward for PHSA to produce a tool any business or employee can use to address this significant health issue.”

PHSA unveiled the new resource, a self-care manual entitled *Antidepressant Skills at Work: Dealing with Mood Problems in the Workplace*, to dozens of BC business leaders. Depression is estimated to cost the BC economy \$2 billion a year, according to the BC Business and Economic Roundtable, yet many businesses do not have tools to offer their employees to address mood problems in the workplace.

“The evidence shows many people can benefit from non-medication strategies – skills rather than pills – to reactivate their lives,” said Wynne Powell, chair of the board for PHSA. “Businesses and workers should be aware of this new, practical resource because depression can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender or background. Around four per cent of working adults are depressed at any given time, and more than 15 per cent of adults will be depressed at some time in their lives.”

Through its specialized agency, BC Mental Health & Addiction Services, PHSA engaged clinical psychologists at SFU’s Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction (CARMHA) to develop a resource based on the most current research available into the best strategies to manage depressed mood. People can use the manual to identify whether they are experiencing depression or depressed mood and apply practical strategies to reduce the effects on work satisfaction and performance.

“I am very pleased to see how such partnerships can translate research into action that benefits our community. Businesses are becoming increasingly aware of the consequences of depression in the workplace and increasingly interested in practical tools to help them help their employees to return to full health,” said Lloyd Craig, businessman and Chairman of the BC Economic Round Table on Mental Health & Addictions.

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Antidepressant Skills in the Workplace was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders concerned with depression in the workplace, including workers who have experienced mood problems, employers, union representatives, physicians, occupational health professionals, disability management personnel, employee and family assistance counselors.

The public can download the self-care manual -- for free -- at the websites of BC Mental Health & Addictions Services (www.bcmhas.ca/research) and at SFU's Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction (www.carmha.ca/publications).

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Note to media: Peter Coleridge, a Senior Advisor with BC Mental Health & Addiction Services, is available for interviews about how this new resource can improve mental health in the workplace.

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