



For immediate release

## **Introducing the Bell Let's Talk Community Fund for 2012**

- *\$1 million fund for community organizations supporting mental health care and access*
- *Online applications now being accepted at [Bell.ca/LetsTalk](http://Bell.ca/LetsTalk)*

MONTREAL, January 16, 2012 – Bell today announced that its \$1 million annual Bell Let's Talk Community Fund will again distribute grants of up to \$50,000 for community-based mental health initiatives across the country this year. Registered not-for-profit organizations, charities, local hospitals and social services agencies are encouraged to apply for funding. The 2012 application period is open until March 31 and grants will be disbursed before December 31, 2012.

"In 2011 the Bell Let's Talk Community Fund invested in 49 different local mental health organizations across Canada," said Mary Deacon, Chair of the Bell Let's Talk initiative. "We are delighted to have partnered with these wonderful organizations, which are doing such important work to help people affected by mental illness in our communities. We look forward to welcoming more new partners to the Bell Let's Talk initiative in 2012."

The Bell Let's Talk Community Fund is part of Bell's five-year, \$50 million mental health initiative. Through the Bell Let's Talk Community Fund, organizations, agencies and hospitals across the country from coast to coast to coast can apply for grants to support programs that aim to eliminate the stigma of mental health and improve access to care.

The fund provides grants to select projects providing front-line support to those impacted by mental health issues, with the objective of improving the well-being of Canadians affected by mental health problems in communities large and small right across the country. To apply online for 2012 funding, or to learn more about Bell Let's Talk Day on February 8, please visit [Bell.ca/LetsTalk](http://Bell.ca/LetsTalk).

The Bell Let's Talk mental health Initiative is built around four action pillars: anti-stigma, care and access, research, and workplace best practices. The facts of mental illness and its impact underscore the need for accelerated support for mental health at all levels in Canada:

- At least 1 in 5 Canadians experiences a form of mental illness at some point in their lives – every one of us has a family member, friend or colleague who will experience mental illness
- Mental health funding is modest relative to other health care issues – mental illness represents 15% of Canada's health care burden but receives only 5% of health care funding
- Just one-third of Canadians who need mental health services actually receive them
- Mental illness is the number one cause of workplace disability in Canada – accounting for 30% of disability claims and 70% of disability costs
- Mental illness costs the Canadian economy \$51 billion each year in lost productivity – every day, 500,000 Canadians are absent from work due to a form of mental illness.

Bell is honoured to be named the recipient of the 2012 Freeman Philanthropic Services Award for Outstanding Corporation for the Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative. The prestigious



international award by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) will be presented in March in Vancouver.

**About Bell**

Bell is Canada's largest communications company, providing consumers and business with solutions to all their communications needs: Bell Mobility wireless, high-speed Bell Internet, Bell Satellite TV and Bell Fibe TV, Bell Home Phone local and long distance, and Bell Business Markets IP-broadband and information and communications technology (ICT) services. Bell Media is Canada's premier multimedia company with leading assets in television, radio and digital media, including CTV, Canada's #1 television network, and the country's most-watched specialty channels. Bell is wholly owned by BCE Inc. (TSX, NYSE: BCE). For Bell products and services, please visit [Bell.ca](http://Bell.ca). For BCE corporate information, please visit [BCE.ca](http://BCE.ca).

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