

Minister of Public Safety



Ministre de la Sécurité publique

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Dear Tri-Services Leadership:

Thank you for your correspondence of September 12, 2016, expressing support for the development of a coordinated action plan on post-traumatic stress injuries, and for your recommendations related to specific areas for immediate federal investment.

Foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the advice, leadership, and collaboration of your organizations as it relates to this important initiative. Your contributions have been essential to a greater understanding of the mental health issues facing first responders, and have been instrumental in shaping the draft elements of the action plan on post-traumatic stress injuries.

The sense of urgency with which this issue must be addressed is all too real; I was deeply saddened to learn of the number of first-responders who have lost their lives to suicide in 2016 alone. Public safety officers play a critical role in keeping Canadians safe and secure, and the Government is committed to ensuring that we, in turn, support their wellbeing.

Canada

Given the magnitude and complexity of post-traumatic stress injuries, Public Safety Canada (PS) has engaged a wide range of stakeholders from across the country. In particular, a Tri-Services Consultative Group has been established with a view to identifying concrete ways to support public safety officers and the organizations that employ them.

As a result of these consultations, and consistent with the recommendations set out in your correspondence, it is anticipated that the proposed action plan will focus on three main pillars: research and data collection; prevention and early intervention; and support for treatment and care. The proposed action plan will seek to balance the need for immediate action, such as the Road to Mental Readiness training program, with longer-term research initiatives to ensure that evidence-based tools and resources are made available to public safety officers, and that an open dialogue is maintained. In particular, PS will explore opportunities to build partnerships with not-for-profit groups such as the organizations mentioned in your letter. As my officials work to finalize the draft action plan, first responders, through the Tri-Services Consultative Group, will continue to be engaged.

Thank you again for writing, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with the tri-services leadership in support of Canada's public safety officers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Goodale', written in a cursive style.

The Honourable Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Jane Philpott, P.C., M.P.