



## MEDIA RELEASE

### DRINKING AND DRIVING IN SASKATCHEWAN PUNISHMENT VS TREATMENT

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In light of recent high-profile drinking and driving court cases, and the ongoing problem of persons dying in alcohol-related fatal accidents, the Premier has rightly identified this as a serious problem which must be addressed.

The Canadian Mental Health Association could not agree with this more.

In listening to public and other discussions regarding this issue, however, most of the content revolves around punishing the person who is drinking and driving, with very little discussion regarding helping persons who have a alcohol addiction problem. It is important to remember that persons who drink to the level of driving while under the influence are often suffering undiagnosed depression, anxiety or other mental health and emotional problems.

While there is no doubt a need for a review of punitive legal measures for persons who drink and drive, there will be limited success without beefing up the assessment, diagnosis and treatment for persons who carry out these dangerous and sometimes deadly behaviours. While we all sympathize with the families who lose a loved one as a result of someone driving drunk, we must remember that there are also repercussions to the drunk driver and their family which will live with them for the rest of their lives.

In conclusion, it is critical that as our Premier and the Health and Justice systems look for ways to address this serious problem in our Province, that a balance between justice and treatment take precedence.

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