

Steve Lurie's letter to the Globe & Mail, written March 15, 2011, in response to an article about wait times for mental health care:

While wait times for hips, knees, MRI's heart disease and cancer have improved due to federal and provincial investments in wait time funding and process improvement, the same cannot be said for psychiatric care. A recently published Fraser Institute study notes that wait times of 16.8 weeks to see a psychiatrist are beyond clinically reasonable and wait times for psychiatric assessments for children and youth can take up to 18 months. Wait times for community support services and housing are measured in months and years. For example the coordinated access program for supportive housing here in Toronto has seen its wait list grow from 700 to 2700 in the past year and it is estimated that over 200,000 people living with mental illness are unable to access the supportive housing options they require across the country. Five years ago Senators Kirby and Keon recommended a 10 year \$5.3 billion transition fund to improve access to community mental health services and supportive housing. We are still waiting.