

Article in the Globe & Mail, Tuesday July 6<sup>th</sup>, regarding the effectiveness of the Bloor Viaduct suicide barrier

Steve Lurie's Letter to the Editor, in response to the above article, published Thursday July 8<sup>th</sup>.

Untreated mental illness is a major risk for suicide. According to published research, the rate of suicide for people living with schizophrenia is 50 times higher than the general population, and 15-30 times higher for people living with bipolar disorder. The statistics on depression say that suicide is the leading cause of death for young people 15-24 years old.

In Canada only 3 in 10 adults access mental health care, and the situation is worse for children and youth. While stigma may be a factor, the biggest problem is the lack of accessible mental health services and a lack of focus on early intervention. It is ironic that the share of health spending on mental health continues to decline, even though we know that recessions lead to increased demands for mental health services.

Provincial governments do have an opportunity to use the increase in federal health transfers between now and 2014 to reverse this trend and focus on early intervention.

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