

Steve Lurie's letter to the Toronto Star, written April 9, 2011, in response to an article about campaign promises for health care spending:

While it is encouraging to see all federal parties committing to maintain the annual 6% increases in health transfers to provincial governments, the question is whether provincial governments can be trusted to make the right investments. The Ontario government invested \$220 million in mental health care, while it added \$14.5 billion in new health spending since 2004. Numerous reports including the all party Select Committee report on mental health and addictions indicate that the mental health system is in crisis, and people cannot get the services they need. Wait times to see psychiatrists have increased, and the waitlist for supportive housing in Toronto has grown from 700 to over 3000 in 18 months. A solution would be for governments to agree that 20% of the health care transfers be dedicated to improving mental health care. Since mental illness affects 20% of Canadians, that would be a good way to recognize there is no health without mental health.