

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



beacon

**Pioneering Digital Mental Health Solution Bridges the Care Gap for Sufferers**

Inspired by a serial entrepreneur's personal experience and proven through clinical testing, digital solution BEACON gives Canadians affordable access to CBT-based treatment for mental illness

**TORONTO** – A leading cause of suffering and disability in Canada, mental illness is truly non-discriminatory. It affects people of all ages, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds and comes at tremendous cost to individuals, employers and the economy. In fact, according to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), it is the number one cause of disability claims in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

The statistics are staggering.

In the last year alone, 7.5 million Canadians struggled with a mental health or addiction problem.<sup>2</sup> In any given week, 500,000 Canadians miss work due to a mental health problem or illness,<sup>3</sup> while the estimated combined cost of absenteeism and presenteeism on the Canadian economy is more than 50 billion dollars annually.<sup>4</sup>

Witnessing these challenges first-hand, BDC Chairperson Sam Duboc (Air Miles, EdgeStone Capital, Pathways to Education Canada) and his wife Claire Duboc (Trustee, SickKids Hospital) decided it was time to make a change. Having experienced the impact of mental illness in their home and on their friends, they sought out and partnered with Dr. Peter Farvolden and Dr. Eilenna Denisoff – who ran a leading Cognitive Behavioural Therapy clinic in Toronto, called CBT Associates.

The result? BEACON. A brand new digitally delivered solution aimed at helping Canadians improve their mental and emotional well-being through timely and affordable support. Using the proven principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and a therapist relationship, BEACON delivers high-quality, consistent, evidence-based treatment via highly trained clinicians. Utilizing a diagnostic assessment, core components of in-clinic best practices and the flexibility associated with innovative digital delivery, BEACON reduces the cost of treatment by up to 75 per cent, eliminates barriers of geography and time, significantly reduces the barrier of stigma and ensures the delivery of evidence-based personalized care.

“There’s an urgent need to make mental healthcare solutions accessible and affordable in this country,” says Sam Duboc, BEACON Executive Chair. “With provincial health agencies covering only a small portion of these costs, Canadians are left with hefty bills, incredibly long wait lists and the task of navigating a system of barriers to care.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Mental Health Commission of Canada (2014). Why investing in mental health will contribute to Canada’s economic prosperity and to the sustainability of our health care system. Retrieved from <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/node/742>

<sup>2</sup> Smetanin et al. (2011). *The life and economic impact of major mental illnesses in Canada: 2011-2041*. Prepared for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Toronto: RiskAnalytica.

<sup>3</sup> Number of disability cases calculated using Statistics Canada employment data, retrieved from <http://www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/labor21a-eng.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Mental Health Commission of Canada. Bridging the gap. Available at <http://bridgingthegap.mentalhealthcommission.ca/>

CBT is a psychotherapy treatment that helps change negative and anxious thoughts, as well as behaviours, so a person can feel and function better to improve his or her quality of life. Numerous clinical trials over many years prove CBT's effectiveness for treating the most common mental health problems, including mood and anxiety disorders. Of significance to the development of BEACON, research has demonstrated that digitally delivered therapist-assisted CBT (or TAIcBT) for common conditions, such as depression and anxiety, is equally beneficial as traditional in-person CBT.<sup>1</sup> In fact, studies show that TAIcBT results in significant reductions in depression, anxiety, and improvements in quality of life.<sup>2</sup> TAIcBT with therapist guidance – which is what BEACON delivers – consistently results in better treatment outcomes compared to self-guided iCBT.<sup>3</sup> For example, iCBT for depression has been found to be twice as effective when supported by a therapist compared to when it is self-guided.<sup>4</sup>

“Through outcome data and patient experience, we’ve seen first-hand the difference BEACON can make in the lives of those in need of mental health treatment,” says Dr. Peter Farvolden, BEACON Lead at CBT Associates. “Technology has changed the way we live our daily lives, so why shouldn’t this also include the way we access mental health treatment? Offering CBT methodology through digital means is an effective way to provide sufferers with not only an immediate channel to their e-therapist, but also accessibility to their individual treatment plan and subsequent tools. Many of our clients, who have tried both, strongly prefer BEACON TAIcBT to traditional face-to-face therapy.”

Proven through rigorous testing in a clinical environment, BEACON is available both as a digital support to traditional CBT as well as a standalone, fully digital CBT solution, with therapist support delivered via the platform and accessible by mobile or desktop. An individual's journey begins with either a rigorous self-assessment or full diagnosis (with the addition of a call with a registered Clinical Psychologist). Users are then guided by a credentialed e-therapist to ensure patients achieve comparable outcomes to traditional treatment – something that is out of reach for so many Canadians. BEACON ensures continuous care delivery by allowing patients to complete the readings, worksheets and outcome measures that are part of a typical CBT treatment plan, on both mobile and desktop. BEACON is also available as a digital adjunct, complementing traditional in-person psychologist sessions at CBT Associate offices.

Some of the forward-thinking organizations partnering with BEACON to develop innovative mental health programs for Canadians include Carrot Insights, Cossette, Deloitte, League, Manulife Financial, Medisys Health Group, Porter Airlines, Public Services Health and Safety Association, Sun Life Financial, and Wilfrid Laurier University.

Physicians interested in referring a patient, can do so via the website at [www.mindbeacon.com](http://www.mindbeacon.com). Patients interested in signing up for BEACON can do so by visiting the website to complete the rigorous online self-assessment or diagnostic assessment.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hedman, E., Ljotsson, B., & Lindfors, N. (2012). Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Via The Internet: A Systematic Review of Applications, Clinical Efficacy and Cost-Effectiveness. *Expert Review of Pharmacoeconomics & Outcomes Research*, 12 (6), 745-64. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1586/erp.12.67>

<sup>2</sup> Hadjistavropoulos, H.D., Pugh, N.E., Nugent, M., Hesser, H., Andersson, G., Marchildon, G.P., et al. (2014). Therapist-Assisted Internet-Delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Depression and Anxiety: Evidence to Practice. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 28, 884-893.

<sup>3</sup> Richards, D. and Richardson, T. (2012). Computer-Based Psychological Treatments for Depression: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 32 (4), 329-42. doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2012.02.004, 329-342.

<sup>4</sup> Andersson, G. and Cuijpers, P. (2009) Internet-Based and Other Computerized Psychological Treatments for Adult Depression: A meta Analysis. *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy*, 38(4), 196-205.

## BEACON

Developed by CBT Associates, BEACON is a digitally delivered solution using the proven principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and therapist relationship to treat mental illness. Utilizing validated core components of in-clinic best practices, BEACON eliminates the barriers of cost, geography and time, reduces the barrier of stigma and ensures the delivery of evidence-based personalized care to those suffering with mental health issues across Canada.  
[www.mindbeacon.com](http://www.mindbeacon.com)

For more information or to request an interview, please contact:

Erin Bodley  
**LIFT Public Relations**

P: (416) 825-2941

E: [erin@liftpr.ca](mailto:erin@liftpr.ca)