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Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
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August 3, 2011

Dear Minister Matthews,

I would like to extend a sincere thank you on behalf of the Board, staff and participants of the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario for your recent decision to consult more broadly on a plan to strengthen the independence of the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office. We agree with you that it is important to take the time to get this right, and to consult broadly with patients and consumer/survivors.

As you may know, the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario offers free peer support both to people living with depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder, and to their families. Across Ontario last year, more than 17,000 people participated in our peer support groups. Since the decision to move the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office was covered in the *Toronto Star* on July 12, 2011, we have received many calls and emails from participants concerned about the future of the Office.

We are very pleased that you have listened to the concerns expressed by the Coalition for an Independent PPAO and to the many email messages and calls you have received from Ontarians who will be affected by this decision.

We trust that your Ministry will continue to work closely with the Coalition, patients and consumer/survivors to create and maintain a permanent and independent Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office.

Sincerely,

Colleen J. Cowman
Executive Director

cc: Coalition for an Independent PPAO