

## Mental Health Police Records Check Coalition

January 17, 2008

Steven Chabot  
President  
Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police  
582 Somerset Street West  
Ottawa, ON K1R 5K2

Dear Mr. Chabot:

### RE: The Impact of Police Record Checks

The Mental Health Police Records Check Coalition would like to congratulate you on your recent appointment as the President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

The Coalition is comprised of a group of over thirty organizations and individuals working to eliminate the practice of releasing non-criminal information as part of the police records check process.

If a person is detained or transported by police under the Ontario *Mental Health Act*, this information is included in a police records check. As a result, some individuals may not be able to pursue career or volunteer opportunities or complete a student placement. Others may be placed in the awkward position of having to disclose the personal details of the contact with the police and the mental health system. In our opinion, the effect of the records check is discriminatory and contrary to the spirit of both the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as it creates barriers for individuals with mental illness or a perceived mental illness.

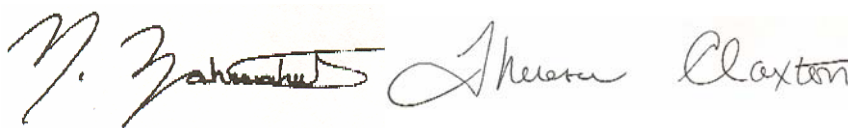
Some police departments record such incidents as "arrests." The use of this language creates an impression that the individual did something wrong and even suggests criminal activity, further stigmatizing the individual.

We would like to discuss this important matter with you and work together to develop a consistent procedure whereby individuals who have non-criminal contact with the police are treated as equal members of society. David Simpson, one of the Coalition's co-chairs, will be contacting you in the near future to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,



David Simpson  
Program Manager  
Psychiatric Patient Advocate  
Office



Nicole Zahradnik  
Community Mental Health Analyst  
Canadian Mental Health  
Association, Ontario

Theresa Claxton  
Chair  
Ontario Association of Patient  
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