

# NEWS RELEASE

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## ***Mother and Son Air “Dirty Laundry” to take on World’s No. 1 Disability***

Marilyn Avient (62 years old) and her son, Sean Krausert (41 years old), have joined forces to create a one-woman theatrical production that creates awareness about depression and mental illness, the world’s top cause of disability (according to the World Health Organization). The production, entitled “*Dirty Laundry*”, will make its Edmonton debut on Friday February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 7:30 PM on the John L. Haar Theatre stage (Grant MacEwan University, Centre for the Arts & Communication, 10045-156 Street).

Avient suffers from a bipolar disorder that often left her in severe depression through the first 40 years of her life, for which she was hospitalized three times. As a result of her illness, she lost her job as a head laboratory technologist and almost lost her family. Now residing in Nanoose Bay on Vancouver Island, she has authored five books associated with depression and has dedicated her work to reaching out to others that are feeling the isolation of this affliction.

According to Health Canada (*cite below*), 20% of all Canadians will personally experience mental illness in their lifetime (depression and anxiety being the most common). “It is very important for society to know that mental illness is a *common* illness – one that can be treated effectively. And, it is equally important for people suffering from mental illness to know that they are supported and not alone” says Krausert, Producer of “*Dirty Laundry*” and Executive Director of Global WE Initiatives Corp. – the company producing the show.

Krausert, too, has battled depression throughout his adult life and knows the painful isolation of the illness, which is only reinforced by the stigma attached to it. Krausert left the practice of law as a result of a severe depression that hit him early in his career. According to the Canadian Medical Association (*cite below*), only 12% of Canadians would hire a lawyer who has suffered a mental illness. Lawyers are 3.6 times more likely to suffer depression than the average person (*John Hopkins University Study, 32 J. Occupational Med. 1079, 1990*).

“*Dirty Laundry*” is based upon Avient’s true story, and depicts the triumph of the human spirit in one woman’s heroic lifelong journey into, through, and out of depression. The production is an engaging, poignant, “no holds barred” depiction of a health issue that affects hundreds of thousands of Canadians every day.

## Background Information

### Mental Health Statistics (& Sources)

#### **IMPACT:**

- Depression is ranked as the LEADING CAUSE OF DISABILITY WORLDWIDE, and affects about 120 million people at any given time.  
*World Health Organization*
- 20% of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime (depression and anxiety being the most common).  
*Health Canada, A Report on Mental Illness in Canada, 2002*
- 100% of Canadians are impacted by mental illness. If not experiencing it themselves, everybody directly knows someone who will experience a mental illness.  
*Health Canada, A Report on Mental Illness in Canada, 2002*
- 500,000 Canadians are absent from work every day due to psychiatric problems.  
*Insurance Journal 2003 as cited by the Gov't of Canada in The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada, 2006*
- 10.4% of Canadians have a mental illness at any given time.  
*Quick Facts: Mental Illness and Addiction in Canada, Mood Disorders Society of Canada, September 2007*
- Approximate 1 Million suicide deaths worldwide.  
<http://chartsbin.com/view/prm> (as of 2009)

#### **STIGMA:**

- Only 1/3 of those who need mental health services in Canada actually receive them.  
*Statistics Canada: Canadian Community Health Survey: Mental Health and Well-Being, 2003*
- Only 50% of Canadians would tell friends or coworkers they have a family member with mental illness (72% would discuss cancer in the family and 68% would discuss diabetes in the family).  
*Canadian Medical Association, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Report Card on Health Care, August 2008*
- Only 12% of Canadians would hire a lawyer who has a mental illness.  
*Canadian Medical Association, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Report Card on Health Care, August 2008*
- Only 49% of Canadians said they would socialize with a friend who has a serious mental illness.  
*Canadian Medical Association, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Report Card on Health Care, August 2008*
- 46% of Canadians think people use the term mental illness as an excuse for bad behaviour.  
*Canadian Medical Association, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual National Report Card on Health Care, August 2008*

#### **COST:**

- As of 2008, it is estimated that the total cost of mental illness to the Canadian economy in terms of health care and lost productivity is **\$51,000,000,000 (\$51 BILLION)**.  
*Dewa, CS et al, A new population-based measure of the burden of mental illness in Canada, Chronic Diseases in Canada, 2008*
- In Canada, while mental illnesses constitute more than 15% of the burden of disease in Canada, they only receive 5.5% of health care dollars.  
*Institute of Health Economics, How Much Should We Spend on Mental Health, September 2008*
- Mental Health is the number one cause of disability claims in Canada (accounting for nearly 30% of disability claims and 70% of the total costs).  
*Insurance Journal 2003 as cited by the Gov't of Canada in The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada, 2006*

### Global WE Initiatives Corp.

The company producing *Dirty Laundry*. The company's mission is to globally advocate for and create awareness of a "WE" worldview through a variety of means and media. A WE worldview is all-inclusive and focuses on social justice issues, specifically - the rights of all people, poverty alleviation, and breaking down artificial barriers that divide people. For more information – [www.globalwe.ca](http://www.globalwe.ca) .

**Dirty Laundry Theatrical Production** - For more information – [www.dirtylaundrytheatre.ca](http://www.dirtylaundrytheatre.ca) .