



Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario 2017 Pre-Budget Submission



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Ontario
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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Ontario government on behalf of our 30 community branches across the province. For the 2017 Ontario budget, we offer the following recommendations:

1. Increase Overall Funding to Manage Demand and Reduce Wait Times in the Mental Health and Addictions Sector (pg. 6)

CMHA Ontario supports the Mental Health Commission of Canada's recommendation to increase spending on mental health and addictions to nine percent from seven percent of the overall provincial health care budget. Currently, Ontario spends approximately \$3.5 billion of the \$51 billion health budget on mental health and addictions.

2. Invest Locally to Support Ontarians Where They Live (pg. 6)

CMHA Ontario recommends a three percent base budget increase for our 30 community branches which provide front-line service to nearly 100,000 Ontarians. Our branches have not received base funding increases in several years. Any new investment is almost always tied to delivery of a specific program and not to overall operations. As a result, branches struggle with staff retention, rising hydro costs and administrative expenditures that impact service delivery.

3. Invest in Core Mental Health and Addictions Services (pg. 7)

CMHA Ontario urges the government to support the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council's ("the Council") approved list of guaranteed core services that should be made available to all Ontarians no matter where they live:

- Prevention, promotion and early intervention services
- Information, assessment and referral services
- Counselling and therapy services
- Peer and family support services
- Specialized consultation and assessment services
- Crisis services
- Intensive treatment services
- Housing and other supports (social determinants)

About CMHA Ontario

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), which operates at the local, provincial and national levels across Canada, works toward a single mission: to make mental health possible for all. The vision of CMHA Ontario, which serves nearly 100,000 people every year, is a society that believes mental health is the key to well-being. We are a not-for-profit, charitable organization which is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Through policy analysis and implementation, agenda setting, research, evaluation and knowledge exchange, we work to improve the lives of people with mental health and addictions conditions and their families. As a leader in community mental health and a trusted advisor to government, we actively contribute to health systems development through policy formulation and by recommending policy options that promote mental health for all Ontarians.

CMHA Ontario works closely with the 30 local branches in communities across the province to ensure the quality delivery of services in the areas of mental health, addictions, dual diagnosis and concurrent disorders which occur across the lifespan.

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4. Significantly Increase Access to Psychotherapy (pg. 8)

CMHA Ontario recommends, and the Council has endorsed, a significant investment in improving access to psychotherapy services (also referred to as talk therapy) for all Ontarians. CMHA Ontario also recommends a province-wide expansion of talk therapy programs such as CMHA York and South Simcoe's Bounce Back program which is a cost effective, evidence-based intervention that teaches cognitive behaviour therapy skills to help adults boost and maintain their mental health.

5. Provide Greater Access to Supportive Housing to Aid Recovery (pg. 8)

CMHA Ontario supports the Council's recommendation to expand the supportive housing system for people with mental health and addictions conditions with the creation of 30,000 new units in the next decade, building at a rate of 3,000 units every year. The estimated annual costs to expand supportive housing to adequately meet demand in Ontario is \$278 million in the first year, rising cumulatively to \$721 million by 2027.

6. Invest in a Data and Performance Measurement Strategy (pg. 10)

CMHA Ontario supports the Council's recommendation for additional investment for a comprehensive data and performance measurement strategy for Ontario. The estimated additional costs for establishing a comprehensive data and performance measurement strategy is \$24 million over the first three years, and approximately \$8 million in operating costs annually.



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CURRENT INVESTMENTS ARE NOT ENOUGH

CMHA Ontario commends the provincial government for its ongoing investments and continued leadership on mental health and addictions issues. Through implementation of *Open Minds, Healthy Minds: Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*, the provincial government has demonstrated that mental health and addictions are a priority. It is encouraging to note that a key aim of the second phase of *Open Minds, Healthy Minds* is to link government investments in mental health and addictions directly to quality of care.¹

Increased government commitment and enhancements in the mental health and addictions sector has led to progress in recent years, but CMHA Ontario looks forward to a time when mental health is funded on par with physical health and when Ontarians will have enhanced access to quality mental health and addictions services. Consider:

- One in three Canadians experience a mental health issue within their lifetime.²
- Currently, more than 6.7 million Canadians are living with a mental health condition in Canada.³
- Mental health conditions occur across the life span, regardless of gender, race or sexual orientation.



1 in 3 Canadians experience a mental health issue in their lifetime.

Mental health and addictions issues continue to have significant societal impact:

- The burden of mental illnesses and addictions in Ontario is more than 1.5 times the burden of all cancers, and seven times the burden of all infectious diseases.⁴
- Suicide and mental health are closely connected; it is estimated that 90 per cent of people who die by suicide (4,000 annually) experienced a mental health problem.⁵
- Among those aged 15 to 24, suicide is the second leading cause of death.



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Furthermore, mental health continues to pose a significant cost to our economy:

- The economic cost to Canada is at least \$50 billion per year, which represents 2.8% of Canada’s gross domestic product (2011).⁶
- Lost productivity (absenteeism, turnover, etc.) costs businesses more than \$6 billion (2011).
- On any given week, more than 500,000 Canadians will not go to work because of mental illnesses.⁷
- Over the next 30 years, the total cost to the economy will have added up to more than \$2.5 trillion.⁸

In his 2009 report, Don Drummond, who led the Commission on the Reform of Ontario’s Public Services, stated that 75 percent of mental health care happens outside the formal health care system (e.g. hospitals).⁹ However, he noted that “community” mental health and addictions (see sidebar) in Ontario remains chronically underfunded.

Estimates by the Ministry of Finance show that the actual total health care spending by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care was \$51 billion for 2015-2016.¹⁰ But funding for “community” mental health and addictions programs was approximately \$1 billion compared to \$2.5 billion for the broader mental health and addictions system.¹¹

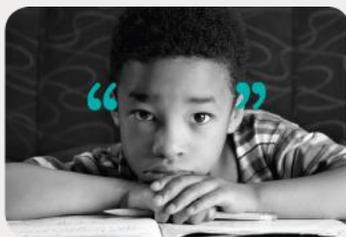
What is Community-Based Mental Health?

Community-based mental health and addiction services are defined as care provided outside of the hospital setting. It includes services and supports provided across the continuum of care, including health promotion, illness prevention, treatment and recovery. It includes not only treatment and crisis response, but also outreach, case management and related services such as housing and employment supports and court diversion programs.

Community-based mental health and substance use care identifies the importance of communities in supporting recovery. This philosophy is supported by the fact that individuals receiving care generally prefer to do so within their community and that for most people, formal mental health and addictions services are just one piece of the puzzle.¹³



75% of mental health care happens outside the formal health care system



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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase Overall Funding to Manage Demand and Reduce Wait Times in the Mental Health and Addictions Sector

Jurisdictions in Canada historically under invest in mental health and addictions. For example, the United Kingdom spends more than nine percent of its health budget on mental health compared to provinces in Canada, which spend an average of just over seven percent. In Ontario, total spending for mental health and addictions amounted to approximately \$3.5 billion in 2015-16 (or seven percent of total health care spending).¹⁴

In its 2012 *National Mental Health Strategy*, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) recommended that provinces allocate close to nine percent of their overall health budgets on mental health and addictions.

CMHA Ontario supports the MHCC's recommendation to increase overall spending on mental health and addictions to nine percent from seven percent of the overall provincial health care budget.

2%

increase in funding for mental health and addictions will help ensure the right care at the right time for all Ontarians.



ANNUAL ECONOMIC COST
of mental illnesses in Canada:

\$50 BILLION

2. Invest Locally to Support Ontarians Where They Live

As CMHA Ontario is uniquely positioned to speak to the needs of the community mental health and addictions sector, we have also identified significant needs of our 30 local branches. Many of these branches have not had increases to base budgets for as many as five to seven years. Like other not-for-profit entities, the 30 CMHA community branches are accustomed to stretching resources. But there are several examples where the branches have been asked to assume additional responsibilities and deliver new programs without additional resources. When branches do receive more funds, investment is almost always tied to a specific program without changing the base budget.

As awareness campaigns continue to break down stigma and discrimination associated with mental health and addictions, we expect the number of Ontarians who will seek support will increase. A failure to increase base budgets will inevitably result in an inability of local CMHA branches to provide the programming that Ontarians will need – and demand – in the future.

In support of our 30 local CMHA branches, CMHA Ontario recommends an increase of three percent to their base budgets to remain competitive, retain staff, address rising hydro costs and other operational expenditures.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council Leads System Transformation

In 2014, the Ontario government appointed the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council (“the Council”), a 20-person advisory group composed of representatives from across the mental health and addictions sector, to support the implementation of *Open Minds, Healthy Minds: Ontario’s Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*. CMHA Ontario is pleased to be a member of the Council.

A key objective of the Council is to develop mechanisms that facilitate high quality, person-centred care as articulated in the *Excellent Care for All Act (2010)*. The Council has been working to ensure that quality improvement is the foundation upon which to build the future of the mental health and addictions system in Ontario.

The Council created a number of working groups to develop cross-sectoral advice to government on how to begin to solve challenges in the system. CMHA Ontario has provided leadership for advancing the quality agenda as co-chair of the Council’s System Alignment and Capacity Working Group. Under the leadership of this working group, CMHA Ontario has co-led several key initiatives: the development of core mental health and addictions services for Ontarians, including access to psychotherapy; and, development of a data and performance measurement strategy for the sector. In addition, CMHA Ontario along with other collaborators has participated in the Council’s Supportive Housing Working Group.

CMHA Ontario fully supports the work of the Council and we are pleased to endorse key recommendations from the Council in our pre-budget submission.

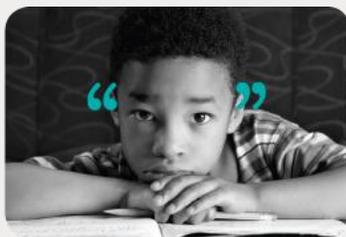
3. Invest in Core Mental Health and Addictions Services

Core mental health and addiction services must have dedicated funding and be available and accessible in all regions of the province. The Council held broad consultations with service providers, stakeholders, people with lived experience and government ministries to identify the following core services that should be available to all Ontarians:

- Prevention, promotion and early intervention
- Information, assessment and referral
- Counselling and therapy
- Peer and family support
- Specialized consultation and assessment
- Crisis support
- Intensive treatment
- Housing and other supports (social determinants)

Establishing core services across all regions of the province would ensure greater health system integration and improved patient experiences. Ontarians could find the right services, where and when they need them. Identifying core services would provide an improved ability to determine where to target existing or new investments and make better use of existing resources. Ultimately, the availability of core services will improve patient outcomes, with more Ontarians having the right supports they need to live in recovery.

CMHA Ontario urges the government to support the Council-approved list of guaranteed core services that should be made available to all Ontarians no matter where they live. Dedicated funding support is urgently required to make these services available and accessible in all regions of the province.



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4. Significantly Increase Access to Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is recognized as an effective, evidence-based intervention for treating anxiety and depression, which afflicts an estimated three million Canadians. A significant investment in psychotherapy will reduce wait times and provide greater access to therapies which can be widely delivered through various methods by a variety of health care professionals.

Free self-help program by doctor referral



BounceBack™
reclaim your health

CMHA York and South Simcoe's *Bounce Back* program¹⁵ is an intervention that teaches cognitive behaviour therapy skills to help adults overcome symptoms of mild to moderate depression, low mood, or stress, with or without anxiety. Participants can learn skills to help combat unhelpful thinking, manage worry and anxiety, and become more active and assertive. *Bounce Back* has been shown to help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety by half, and over 90 percent of participants say they would recommend it to a friend or family member. CMHA York and South Simcoe operates the *Bounce Back* program in the Central Local Health Integration Network catchment area.

Another example is the United Kingdom's program, *Improving Access to Psychological Therapies*.^{16,17} This service was designed to

increase access to psychotherapy. The program offered patients a first-line treatment option (talk therapy), combined with medication where, and if, needed.

CMHA Ontario recommends and the Council has endorsed a significant investment in improving access to psychotherapy services (also referred to as talk therapy) for all Ontarians. CMHA also recommends a province-wide expansion of talk therapy programs such as *Bounce Back*, a cost effective, evidence-based intervention that teaches cognitive behaviour therapy skills to help adults boost and maintain their mental health.

5. Provide Greater Access to Supportive Housing to Aid Recovery

Homelessness and affordable housing have always been top issues for people with mental health and addictions problems. Housing in general and supportive housing in particular provides an anchor for other things in life. Research indicates that having a place to call home means a better quality of life and success in education and work. It improves outcomes from even severe mental health and addictions problems. Supportive housing can decrease problematic drug and alcohol use and it has the potential to improve physical health.

In Ontario, we have less than half the supportive housing we need.

Appropriate housing with supports can lead to significantly reduced costs in other areas such



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fewer encounters with the police and justice sectors.^{18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27}

In spite of the body of evidence, the current supply of supportive housing is woefully inadequate.

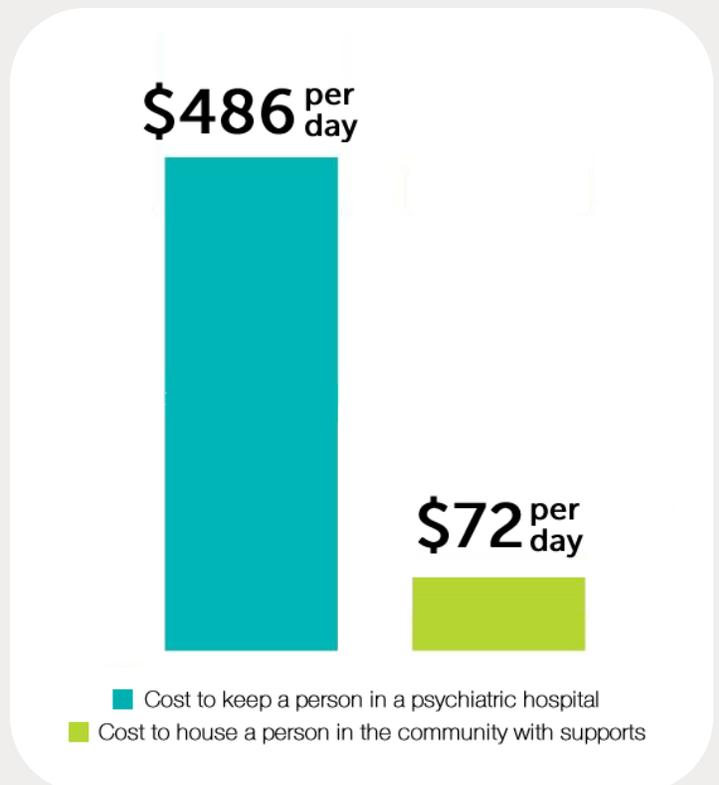
In Ontario, we have less than half the supportive housing we need and because of this we are failing some of the most vulnerable people in our society. This shortfall also undermines the ability of the Ontario government to reach its homelessness goal: ending chronic homelessness within 10 years, by 2025.²⁸

After broad consultation, the Council has prepared a supportive housing strategy that addresses the following key challenges:

- Ontario does not have sufficient supportive housing to meet the needs of our population.
- The system should provide a more flexible range of support services, to meet the needs of different population groups and better respond to shifting individual needs.
- A range of housing options (e.g. additional housing stock, housing with supports, rent supplements for private rentals) is needed to suit individual needs and different local housing markets.
- More system coordination is needed between government ministries and between Local Health Integration Networks and service managers.

The Council’s supportive housing strategy builds on directions set out in the government’s *Poverty Reduction Strategy, Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update*, and the report of the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness.

CMHA Ontario supports the Council’s recommendation to expand the supportive housing system for people with mental health and addictions conditions with the creation of 30,000 new units in the next decade, building at a rate of 3,000 units every year. The estimated annual costs to expand supportive housing in Ontario is \$278 million in the first year, rising cumulatively to \$721 million by year 10.





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6. Invest in a Data and Performance Management Strategy

Ontario currently lacks a standardized, province-wide system of evidence-based performance measurement for the mental health and addictions sector. While data exists that seeks to measure performance at a number of levels, it varies widely across the sector and falls short of being able to provide Ontarians with a clear picture of what needs to be improved. Moreover, even the existing data cannot be easily linked to the broader health care sector or any of the other publicly-funded sectors such as housing, social services, and criminal justice. As such, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive data and performance measurement strategy for the mental health and addictions sector.

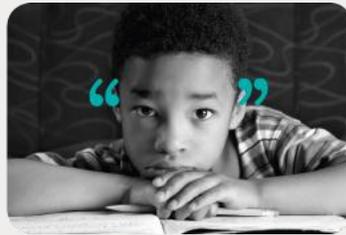
Excellent data quality is an essential component of performance measurement and quality improvement. Through our work in support of the Council and extensive consultations with partners across the sector, CMHA Ontario has developed a clear understanding of the mental health and addictions data landscape in Ontario. There are many challenges facing community-based agencies as many lack capacity and financial and technical resources for data collection. Further investments are needed to build the data infrastructure of the community sector. Without valid, comparable, consistent data, we cannot adequately measure our performance. And without effective performance

Without valid, consistent data, we cannot adequately measure our performance.

measurement indicators, we cannot improve the quality of our performance. Quality improvement initiatives cannot succeed without the necessary data infrastructure.

Therefore, it is essential that outcomes are measured across multiple systems – health care, housing, social services and criminal justice, for example – to gain a true understanding of the positive impact of mental health and addictions services for Ontarians. This has to occur in a phased approach where data alignment is achieved first within the mental health and addictions sector, followed by alignment across the broader health sector and beyond. The Council has developed a comprehensive data and performance measurement strategy, with key foundational initiatives, that pave the way for mental health and addictions system transformation.

CMHA Ontario supports the Council’s recommendation for additional investment for a comprehensive data and performance measurement strategy for Ontario. The estimated additional costs for establishing a comprehensive data and performance measurement strategy is \$24 million in start-up costs over the first three years, and approximately \$8 million in operating costs annually.



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