



# Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario

## 2016 Pre-Budget Submission



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Ontario  
*Mental health for all*

Association canadienne  
pour la santé mentale  
Ontario  
*La santé mentale pour tous*



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## INTRODUCTION

Through *Open Minds, Healthy Minds: Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*, the provincial government has made mental health a priority. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario commends the provincial government for its ongoing investments and continued leadership in the implementation of this strategy, which includes a 10-year commitment to meeting the mental health needs of Ontarians. CMHA Ontario looks forward to a time when Ontarians have better access to quality mental health and addictions services. 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<sup>1</sup>.

But while increased government commitment and enhancements in the mental health and addictions sector has led to progress in recent years, the need for quality delivery of mental health and addictions services persists. Consider:

- One in three Canadians experiences a mental health issue within their lifetime<sup>2</sup>.
- Currently, more than 6.7 million Canadians are living with a mental health condition in Canada<sup>3</sup>. Mental health conditions occur across the life span, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation or any other social location.
- More than 28 per cent of people aged 20-29 experience a mental illness in a given year, and by the time people reach 40 years of age, 1 in 2 people in Canada will have had or have a mental illness<sup>4</sup>.

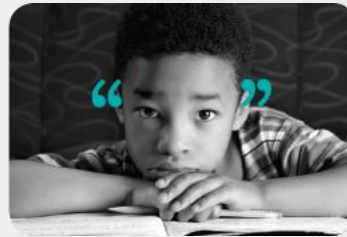
### About CMHA Ontario

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 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 31 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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## INTRODUCTION

Furthermore, mental health continues to pose a significant cost to our economy. A recent study released by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) reveals that:

- The economic cost to Canada is at least \$50 billion per year, which represents 2.8 per cent of Canada's 2011 gross domestic product (GDP)<sup>5</sup>.
- Lost productivity (i.e. absenteeism, presenteeism and turnover) cost business more than \$6 billion in 2011.
- Over the next 30 years, the total cost to the economy will have added up to more than \$2.5 trillion<sup>6</sup>.
- 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<sup>7</sup>.



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## INVESTING IN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

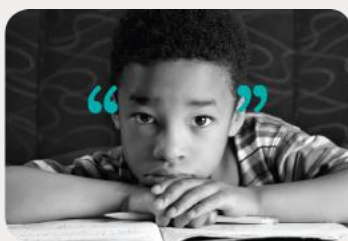
In his report, Don Drummond, who led the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services, stated that 75 per cent of mental health care happens outside the formal health care system<sup>8</sup>. However, he also pointed out that *community mental health and addictions* (see sidebar) in Ontario remains *chronically underfunded*. Estimates by the Ministry of Finance show that the total actual health care spending in 2014-2015 by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care was approximately \$50 billion<sup>9</sup>. But the actual funding for community mental health and addictions programs in that fiscal year was just over \$1 billion<sup>10</sup>.

According to the MHCC, only seven percent of public spending in Canada goes to mental health. This is far below the 10 to 11 per cent of public health spending devoted to mental health in countries such as New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The Mental Health Commission of Canada recommends an increase in the national mental health investment from seven to nine per cent of total health spending over 10 years<sup>11</sup>.

**Similarly, CMHA Ontario recommends that the Government of Ontario also increase its provincial investments in mental health by another two percent, with an aspirational goal of seven to nine percent of total health spending over the next 10 years.**

### What is Community-Based Mental Health?

Community-based mental health is 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 individuals, formal mental health services are just one piece of the treatment puzzle<sup>12</sup>.



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## PROVIDING LEADERSHIP IN MENTAL HEALTH

In 2014, the Government of Ontario established the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council, a cornerstone of its commitment to mental health. CMHA Ontario is pleased to be a member of the council and support its work to implement *Open Minds, Healthy Minds: Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*. 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). In its first year, the advisory 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.

In this regard, CMHA Ontario has provided leadership for advancing the quality agenda. CMHA Ontario co-chairs the council's System Alignment and Capacity Working Group and has led, in partnership with Addictions and Mental Health Ontario, several key initiatives, including developing strategies for: data and performance measurement; and, implementation of quality improvement across the community-based mental health and addictions sector.

Excellent data quality is an essential component of performance measurement and quality improvement. Through

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

extensive consultations with our partners across the sector, we now have a clear understanding of the mental health and addictions data landscape in Ontario. There are many challenges facing community-based agencies as many agencies lack capacity as well as 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 measurement indicators, we cannot improve the quality of our performance. Quality improvement initiatives cannot succeed without the necessary data infrastructure.

**Therefore, CMHA Ontario recommends that the Government of Ontario provide dedicated investments to build the data infrastructure for community-based mental health and addictions agencies across the province.**



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## PROMOTING PARTNERSHIPS IN MENTAL HEALTH

CMHA Ontario applauds the provincial government's mental health strategy for promoting partnerships and utilizing a whole-of-government approach to addressing the mental health needs of Ontarians. CMHA Ontario is pleased to be partnering with multiple provincial ministries to deliver high quality programs across Ontario to serve marginalized populations who are often difficult to reach and engage.

The HSJCC Network, which reaches more than 2,000 people, consists of a provincial committee, 14 regional committees and 42 local committees.

In 2015, with increased provincial investments, CMHA Ontario established a secretariat for the Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee (HSJCC) Network, an integrated, inter-ministerial collaboration between the ministries of the Attorney General, Children and Youth Services, Community and Social Services, Community Safety and Correctional Services, and Health and Long-Term Care. The HSJCC Network comprises individuals working at the frontlines across multiple sectors, including health and social service organizations, community mental health and addictions organizations as well as crown attorneys, judges, police services and correctional service providers. The

HSJCC Network, which reaches more than 2,000 people, consists of a provincial committee, 14 regional committees and 42 local committees, all working together to identify issues, share promising practices and address barriers facing individuals with special needs who come into contact with the justice system. CMHA branches actively participate in the HSJCC Network through its local and regional committees across Ontario.

CMHA Ontario has also partnered in the establishment of the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health through an enhanced partnership with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Colleges Ontario, the Council of Ontario Universities, the College Student Alliance and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. Through this centre, CMHA Ontario is supporting outreach to young people on Ontario's college and university campuses who are facing challenges with their mental health.

CMHA Ontario also embarked on a collaboration with a non-traditional stakeholder: the Ontario Hockey League (OHL). Together, we created and launched Talk Today in October 2014. The program raises awareness about suicide and promotes the mental health of boys and young men between the ages of 16 and 20, a typically hard-to-reach demographic. Talk Today began during the 2014-2015 OHL season and has garnered national interest.



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## PROMOTING PARTNERSHIPS IN MENTAL HEALTH



Subsequently, it's been launched with other sports organizations and a school board. Talk Today provides an important opportunity to address the mental health needs of athletes across the province and across Canada. This program has become a valuable platform for CMHA branches, teams and individual players to encourage open discussion about mental health within the sports community and the broader public.

In addition to the collaborative projects listed above, the 31 local CMHA branches work in a variety of partnerships to provide a coordinated, continuum of care using the social determinants of health model.

Supportive housing is consistently identified as one of the top priorities by local branches. While the announcement of 1,000 new supportive housing units is welcome news in a chronically underserved area, the need is so much greater and further investments are

required to support Ontarians in need. A variety of models of supportive housing is necessary, including the *Housing First* model, where housing is provided as the first step, in combination with supportive services. Rent supplements, short-stay crisis safe beds for vulnerable populations, and group living with onsite supports are other methods of housing with supports which remain necessary.

Importantly, CMHA Ontario commends the Government of Ontario on the release of *A Place to Call Home: Report of the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness*.

**CMHA Ontario supports the panel's recommendations that the government set an aggressive target to end chronic homelessness within 10 years.**



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## SUMMARY

To summarize, CMHA Ontario recommends the Government of Ontario contemplate the following budget considerations for 2016-2017:

- Increase its provincial investments in mental health by another two per cent, with an aspirational goal of seven to nine per cent of total health spending over the next 10 years;
- Increase quality standards by providing dedicated investments to build the data infrastructure for community-based mental health and addictions agencies across the province;
- Increase investments in supportive housing with an aggressive target to end chronic homelessness within 10 years.

**CMHA Ontario looks forward to working with any government ministry to ensure increased access to quality mental health and addictions services are available to Ontarians when they need it, where they need it.**

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