Connecting Quality for Better Care
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Who We Are
Addictions and Mental Health Ontario (AMHO) represents over 220 addiction and mental health service and support providers in Ontario. Our members provide services and supports that help Ontarians across the province with their recovery, including community-based counselling and case management, peer support and consumer-run businesses, residential treatment, withdrawal management, supportive housing and hospital-based inpatient and outpatient programs.

What We Do
As the collective voice of our members, we provide leadership and engage partners to build a comprehensive and accessible system of addiction and mental health care, and improve the well-being of individuals, families and communities in Ontario. We do this through policy work, advocacy initiatives, service development, knowledge exchange, education offerings and quality improvement work.

Why We Do It
In any year, over 2.5 million Ontarians will experience an addiction or mental illness challenge. Yet as many as one-third of Ontarians who identify themselves as needing mental health or addiction services report not getting help, or having their needs only partially met. Those who reach out for help often face significant wait times for services. While mental illness and addiction represent 10% of the burden of disease, less than 7% of Ontario’s public investment in health care addresses these problems.
2015/16 was a formative year for Addictions and Mental Health Ontario.

We expanded our capacity and staff, and positioned ourselves to work on the issues that matter most to our member organizations and the people we serve.

To build on our members’ innovative quality improvement initiatives, AMHO joined forces with CMHA Ontario and Health Quality Ontario to launch the Excellence through Quality-Improvement Project (EQIP). EQIP will support organizations with quality improvement projects, and enable us to gather data and evidence about how we can provide the highest quality of care for people living with mental health and addiction issues.

AMHO has also been working to better connect the experience and expertise of our members with decision-makers. Our efforts to bring these perspectives to the Mental Health and Addiction Leadership Advisory Council continue. This includes work on developing a set of core services that should be available to all Ontarians across the province, providing recommendations on how to better serve youth with addictions, and making the case for a supportive housing strategy for people living with mental illness and addiction.

Significant change is underway in our sector. The broader healthcare system is evolving, with the goal of making it easier and more seamless for Ontarians to access care. At the same time, more Ontarians are starting to feel comfortable reaching out for help with their mental illness and addiction issues. These changes challenge us to do even more with less, but also present more opportunities for our sector to make a difference.

As your Association, AMHO will continue to advocate for investments, quality improvements and policies that will increase the capacity of our sector to improve the well-being of individuals, families and communities across Ontario.

Sincerely,

Gail Czukar
CEO

Karim Mamdani
President and Chair, Board of Directors
**2015/16**

**A Foundational Year**

### 1. AMHO supported decision-makers

AMHO expertise is often sought by policy-makers. At other times, we work hard to get mental health and addiction services the attention they deserve. In 2015/16, AMHO:

- Advocated to government that *alcohol and cannabis policies* place priority on addiction treatment and prevention programs.
- Met with LHIN CEOs and leads to make the case for community-based mental health and addiction care.
- Was an active member of the government’s [Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council](#).
- Brought the case for sector funding to government at [pre-budget hearings](#).
- Submitted a response to the government’s [Patients’ First discussion paper](#), emphasizing how mental health and addiction services can support the government’s move toward integrated, patient-centric care.
- Served on the Government of Ontario’s [Methadone Treatment and Services Advisory Committee](#).

### 2. AMHO facilitated knowledge exchange

A core aspect of AMHO’s work involves bringing the sector together for learning, collaboration and knowledge exchange. In 2015/16 we:

- Brought over 275 attendees together for our [annual conference](#) under the theme “Transforming the System, Changing Lives”. Thirty workshops and three keynote addresses explored a range of topics across the sector.
- Recognized the achievements of [Barbara Frampton with the President’s Shield award](#) for her outstanding contributions to the consumer survivor and peer support movement.
- Hosted two successful [Community of Practice](#) meetings that brought together health professionals from across the province and the mental health & addiction continuum to network, learn, and be inspired.
- Hosted a [webinar](#) to discuss the annual report of Ontario’s Mental Health & Addictions Leadership Advisory Council.
AMHO strengthened its own capacity

AMHO is a stronger organization at the end of 2015/16 - with more capacity to represent its members and provide system leadership. Among the successes of 2015/16 are:

- **Secured more funding**, from more diverse funding sources, to carry out its mission.
- Developed **stronger staffing** support.
- Conducted extensive consultations in support of AMHO’s **first strategic plan**.
- Moved into **new space** that supports better connection with key partners and decision-makers.

AMHO connected service providers and policy-makers

AMHO is a connector. In 2015/16 we connected frontline mental health and addictions service providers to key government initiatives, including:

- The development of a **core set of services**, under the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council.
- The development of **recommendations to support youth with addictions**, through the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council.
- A **supportive housing strategy** for Ontarians living with mental illness and addiction challenges.
- Bringing together a group of community mental health and addiction providers to partner with other stakeholders on the development of a **province wide scorecard for MH&A**.
- Assembling a group of community mental health and addictions providers to advise the government on the province-wide elements of **Multi-Service Accountability Agreement**.
AMHO built a stronger system

In a health care system based on regional planning, AMHO works on the key provincial building blocks of an effective mental health and addiction system. AMHO has played a key leadership role in the following areas:

- **Youth addictions** - This is a critical service area, challenged by the involvement of multiple ministries. In 2015 AMHO was asked to lead a working group on improving youth addiction services.

- **Core Services for Mental Health and Addictions** - AMHO co-leads a task group of the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council with the objective of identifying MH&A services that need to be both available and accessible to all Ontarians.

- **Access** - AMHO received funding to conduct a provincial analysis of LHIN-based mental health and addictions access mechanisms, which was conducted in the winter/spring of 2016.

- **Residential service standards** - AMHO, through funding received under Health Canada’s Drug Treatment Funding Program (DTFP), led the development of adult residential treatment standards, and hosted a forum on how service standards are best developed, monitored and enforced. This project is also developing a sector specific quality indicator card.

- **Peer support** - How can persons with lived experience meaningfully engage in decisions about how programs are funded, delivered and evaluated? AMHO, funded through DTFP, conducted extensive consultation on this question, and is working on a best practices guide.

- **Quality improvement** - AMHO was proud to launch the EQIP project in 2015/16 in partnership with CMHA Ontario and Health Quality Ontario. Over 18 months EQIP is helping community-based mental health and addictions service providers to build skills and quality improvement mechanisms.
Connecting Quality in Supportive Housing

Managed alcohol housing program meets people where they are

Nipissing Mental Health Housing and Support Services believe that housing services for people with mental illness and addiction are most successful when they are designed to recognize that recovery and wellness are personal and unique.

That’s why when the agency identified that there were a number of people in their community who were struggling with alcohol addiction, unable to hold down housing and who required frequent medical and EMS interventions, they launched the Lakeshore Housing Pilot Project.

The supportive housing project, built on a harm reduction philosophy, empowers residents to maintain full control of their care plan, while providing 24-hour wrap-around services and support.

“Our project was born from a real need in the community, and recognizes that housing provides the stability and foundation to get to work on growth and wellness – whatever that might mean for the individual,” says Mary Davis, Executive Director of Nipissing Mental Health Housing and Support Services.

Early results show significant reductions in hospital admissions and ER visits. Six months prior to move-in, our seven residents spent a combined 315 days in hospital. Six-months after move-in, that number dropped to zero,” continues Davis.

Residents in the program set their own goals and the staff help support them to achieve their goals. The program is seeing success in helping people improve their quality of life, through increased self-esteem and re-attainment of personal identity, as the focus shifts from managing their addiction to rebuilding their lives.

Towards a supportive housing strategy for Ontario

AMHO is sharing our member’s policy expertise from programs such as Nipissing Mental Health Housing and Support Services’ managed alcohol program with the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council supportive housing working group. This work will inform a provincial strategy for supportive housing for people living with mental illnesses and addictions.
Connecting Quality in Peer Support

Program supports healthy transitions from hospital to community care

Hospital staff often feel they do not have adequate time to spend supporting individuals with mental health and addiction challenges, and their family members. This challenge was identified in a survey of clients, families and hospital staff in the Champlain LHIN.

The solution? An organized, specially-trained group of peer workers and family peer support workers – employees of Psychiatric Survivors of Ottawa – who work in three Ottawa hospitals and the community. The peer workers assist with the transition from hospital inpatient settings to the community. The program, called Recovery Connections, has been evaluated, and the results are impressive.

Focus groups with clients revealed overwhelming support for the services offered by peer support workers. It was really nice to chat with and talk to someone who’s non-judgmental and has been there before, said one client. Thank you for saving my life, said another.

Over 90% either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement: My overall experience with the peer support worker program was positive. (Focus group participant)

The evaluation also sought feedback from hospital staff. Despite initial concerns, staff found the peer support workers to be “well-trained, approachable and adaptive to hospital culture.”

This year Accreditation Canada recognized the Montfort Hospital/Recovery Connections partnership as a leading practice in peer support and family peer support.

“This has been an extraordinary success,” said Sonja Cronkhite, Executive Director of Psychiatric Survivors of Ottawa. “The partnership with hospitals has allowed us to improve the hospital experience for both peers and families, and to ease the transition to community supports.”

Identifying best practices in peer support

The achievements of the peer support movement have helped shift the delivery of services to a recovery focus, with an emphasis on hope and empowerment. By expanding this work to include people and families with lived experience more broadly, service quality can be improved through dialogue and understanding. One of the goals of AMHO’s DTAF-funded Best Practices in Peer Support program is to assist in identifying and spreading leading practices such as this.
Connecting Quality in Residential Services

A systematic approach to ensuring client voices are heard

A commitment to client service is what drives everything Hope Place Centres does. And the only way to know if you are serving clients’ needs is by asking them.

Each year, Hope Place Centres conducts a client satisfaction survey. The results from their survey are used to identify areas for quality improvement, and are reported to their LHIN.

So when Deborah Gatenby, CEO of Hope Place Centres, found out only 60.5% of their clients reported knowing how to make a suggestion or complaint, she took action.

Hope Place Centres used a three-pronged approach to improve client knowledge on how to provide suggestions and feedback. First, they engaged their team to ensure buy-in by linking compensation to improvement of this indicator. Second, they increased communication with clients, including additional touchpoints at pre-admission and during the first one on one session with the client and case manager. Finally, they increased visibility, accessibility and ease of use for the process of making a complaint or suggestion.

“The results of our survey the following year tells the story of how successful our efforts were to improve the client feedback process,” says Gatenby. “90% of respondents ‘agreed strongly’ and 7.5% of respondents ‘agreed’ for an aggregate score of 97.5% – a whopping growth rate that surpassed our long-term goal and was more than double our annual target!”

Gatenby says that they did not predict the impact the client feedback would have. “Often their positive feedback highlights things that we never paid attention to; subtleties and nuances that once seemed insignificant have become new areas for us to focus on.”

“We unexpectedly gained a whole new level of self-awareness from our clients because they’ve taught us to see ourselves through their eyes.” says Deborah Gatenby

Residential quality indicators

The knowledge gained through Hope Place’s quality improvement journey has been key to informing AMHO’s DTFP Evaluation of Residential Treatment Services project, which will be launching a pilot draft indicators test in early 2017. This is another example of how community work can be transferable to provincial initiatives.
Connecting Quality for Youth

Mental health services that make sense to young people

Mental health professionals in Chatham-Kent are determined to make services for young people more accessible and responsive. They are forging new partnerships, reconfiguring space, and submitting their program ideas to a panel of young people and their families. It is changing the way services are delivered.

It’s all part of a Canada-wide research initiative, based on international models from Australia and the UK. ACCESS Open Minds is a large-scale, multi-site demonstration project funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research and a private funder, the Graham Boeckh Foundation. Chatham-Kent is one of 12 sites nation-wide, and the only one in Ontario.

The idea is simple: create a mental health delivery hub that aims to connect people aged 11 to 25 years with mental health services, in one location. “Young people and their families don’t need to travel from service to service,” explains Paula Reaume-Zimmer, who is responsible for integrated mental health services in Chatham-Kent. “The service comes to them.”

ACCESS is already breaking new ground. Young people experiencing the whole range of mild to serious mental health problems are now able to consult a youth-friendly service designed through collaboration between youth, families and service providers.

“Young people can access a trained professional without a referral, and be evaluated within 72 hours in a setting that is suitable for them. They receive customized care quickly if they need it.” says Paula Reaume-Zimmer.

For more information on the national project, please visit www.accessopenminds.ca

SCALING UP

Youth addictions working group

Ensuring that youth have access to services that meet their needs and are designed from start to finish with youth input is a key takeaway from the Access project. AMHO is ensuring this perspective is being delivered through our work leading the youth addictions working group of the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council.
We’re Stronger Together

At AMHO, we are inspired and driven by the work our members do. That’s why we work hard to support our members through professional development and continuing education, insurance and group benefit plans, and collaborate with system partners on policy and advocacy work to engage the sector and the public.

As an AMHO member, you benefit from:

- **Up to date information and resources.** AMHO knows what is happening in the sector, the system and in government, and provides members with analyzed, concise and up-to-date information on the issues. In other words, what you need to know, when you need to know it.

- **Advocacy and government relations.** On behalf of our members and in collaboration with our system partners, AMHO advocates for a more comprehensive and accessible system of addiction and mental health care, and the well-being of all Ontarians.

- **Education, events and networking opportunities** are available year round for members, at our Annual Conference, our Community of Practice meetings, as well as through free webinars.

- **A holistic approach.** AMHO represents both the addiction and mental health sectors, and we work closely with primary care, community support services, justice and other sectors to bring a comprehensive approach to all the work we do.

- **Group benefits and insurance rates.** Keep your staff healthy and safe with a comprehensive health and dental plan at a highly competitive rate through AMHO’s group benefits plan.

- **Discount registration** at the annual conference and bi-annual community of practice meetings.

- **Policy development and quality improvement work** that strengthens your capacity to use evidence and data and improve service quality.

Let’s improve the well-being of Ontarians

**Keep in touch:** read AMHO communiques, subscribe to our monthly newsletter Bird’s Eye View and follow us on Twitter and Facebook @AMHOnt.

**Speak up:** be an advocate in your community for a comprehensive and accessible system of addiction and mental health care.

**Shape your Association:** get in touch with us on the issues that matter to you, and consider joining AMHO’s Board of Directors.
Our Board of Directors

President
Karim Mamdani
Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences

Director
Tom Carroll
Mackay Manor Inc.

Director
Robert Moore
Provincial System Support Program at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

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Paula Reaume-Zimmer
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Karen Parsons
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Director
Garry Laws
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Holt Sivak
Thresholds Homes and Supports

Director
Chair of the Governance Committee
Alice Bellavance
Brain Injury Services of Northern Ontario

Director
Steve Lurie
Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch
Financial Report 2015/16

Statement of Revenue & Expenses
for the year ended March 31, 2016

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<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
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AMHO Staff

CEO
Gail Czukar
Sr. Manager, Member Relations and Projects
Janis Cramp
Research Policy Analyst
Lynette Katsivo
Research Policy Analyst
Birpreet Saini
Manager, Finance and Operations
Shorna James

Administrative Assistant
Jenny Santokhi
Director, Quality Improvement
Sandra Cunning
Communications and Public Affairs Officer
Jessica Behnke
Senior Policy Advisor
Barney Savage
Administrative Support
Abbi Indrakumar

All of the images featured in our annual report were provided by our members. Thank you to everyone who submitted photos!
Contact Us
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Let’s keep in touch!

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