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May 30, 2016

Dear Members and Sector Partners:

Addictions and Mental Health Ontario (AMHO) is pleased to present our inaugural Strategic Plan - Building on Our Strengths.

We are launching it at our Annual Conference to recognize our shared commitment to helping people with mental illness and addictions, who often come to us at the most vulnerable time in their lives. This plan builds on the strengths, experience and expertise of Ontario’s community-based mental health and addictions sectors – those organizations that deliver valuable services every day.

For AMHO, this plan will help us reach our mission of achieving optimal addictions and mental health outcomes for Ontarians by providing leadership, using the collective voice of our members and engaging partners. It embraces our vision of ensuring a comprehensive and accessible system of addiction and mental health care, and improving the well-being of individuals, families and communities in Ontario.

For this Strategic Plan to be successful, AMHO must develop a comprehensive approach to implementation, member engagement and measurement.

As such, our plan is specific, detailed and measurable. It outlines our high-level Strategic Directions, the goals we will implement to achieve them, and the outcomes we want to achieve. As a member-driven organization, these results will reflect the deep commitment, compassion and expertise that Ontario’s community-based mental health and addictions organizations bring to their jobs every day.

We look forward to partnering with you to ensure the success of our inaugural Strategic Plan in support of the community mental health and addictions sector in our province.

Sincerely,

Karim Mamdani
President & Chair, Board of Directors

Gail Czukar
CEO
Introduction

Addictions and Mental Health Ontario (AMHO) provides a provincial voice for over 200 community-based mental health and addictions service providers throughout Ontario. AMHO represents the full continuum of mental health and addiction organizations and services, ranging from community-based service providers to peer and consumer survivor groups, to Community Health Centres (CHC) and hospitals and hospital-based services.

As an organization, AMHO is still in the early years of our history. The organization was created in 2013 through the merger of Addictions Ontario (AO) and the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs (OFCMHAP).

Our first Strategic Plan - *Building on Our Strengths* - will establish our foundation for years to come.

Our First Strategic Plan - A Three-Year Plan Guiding Our Priorities

The AMHO Strategic Plan will guide our priorities from 2016 to 2019. As an association, we are informed by our members' priorities and their commitment and expertise in serving people with mental illness and addictions.

This plan is a guide for the community-based mental health and addiction sector’s efforts to navigate and succeed in an evolving health care environment. It builds on our members’ experience of delivering effective outcomes today while ensuring they are prepared for the challenges and opportunities coming tomorrow.

Embodying our Mission and Vision

Our core mission and vision guide everything we do as an organization, and form the foundation of our three-year Strategic Plan.
MISSION
To achieve optimal addictions and mental health outcomes for Ontarians by providing leadership, being the collective voice of our members, and engaging partners.

VISION
A comprehensive and accessible system of care for addictions and mental health, which improves the well-being of all individuals, families and communities in Ontario.

Collaboration: Building on our Member’s Achievements
This Strategic Plan is a collaborative document, and it builds on the strengths, experiences and expertise of AMHO’s member organizations. The development process was informed by consultations that included:

- Interviews with over 20 key stakeholders
- A day-and-a-half planning retreat for AMHO Board members
- Further member consultations at AMHO’s November AGM
- A final review process with the new AMHO Board in January 2016

This plan will keep AMHO focused on our priorities, key directions, goals and outcomes in support of our members, people with lived experience of addiction and mental illness, and the system as a whole.

Driving Our Goals
AMHO provides leadership and support to strengthen and focus the mental health and addictions system towards improving outcomes, access and quality care for individuals with lived experience, their families and friends.

The Strategic Plan is intended to provide focus and clarity in how AMHO will help:

- Members to continue enhancing the services they provide
- Funders and other stakeholders to understand the work our members do and the challenges they face
- AMHO to speak up for investments and policies that will improve the accessibility and comprehensiveness of addictions and mental health services in Ontario

As an integral part of the health and community care sectors, AMHO understands the importance of aligning our work with government and system priorities.
To this end, AMHO is also developing a document to describe Key Attributes of a Successful Mental Health and Addictions System

- **Accessible** - Clients find help they need in a timely way
- **Client-centred** - Services are designed to meet the needs of the client and their loved ones
- **High-quality** - Services are safe, effective, and delivered respectfully, helping clients to recover and sustain their recovery
- **Aligned** - It is clear how clients move from one part of the service system to another
- **Equitable** - Services recognize that some Ontarians face barriers to access services, and develop programs that meet the unique needs of these populations

Key Foundations: Data Capacity, Cost Effectiveness, and Strong Organizations.

As our plan unfolds, this paper will help us identify specific goals for a strong system of services and how AMHO’s activities contribute to achievement of those goals. It will also help us tell our story.

**Our Strategic Environment: A Rapidly-Changing Landscape**

Ontario’s mental health and addictions sector will be highly active over the three-year period covered by this plan.

On the strategic horizon, there are a number of government initiatives and priorities that will have implications for our sector, including:

- Expanding the role of LHINs and restructuring the system
- Updating Ontario’s Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy
- Implementing the first steps of Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Developing an Alcohol Strategy for Ontario
- Responding to the federal government’s discussions on legalization and regulation of marijuana
- Considering the implications of physician assisted death legislation

Moreover, the Mental Health and Addiction Leadership Advisory Council (MHALAC), of which AMHO is a member, will continue its work and move forward on key recommendations. This province-wide focus on our sector is critical, and AMHO recognizes the opportunity and importance of being actively involved in shaping the future of mental health and addictions care and treatment in our province. It is also of great importance in strengthening our collective capacity to improve access to services for all.
AMHO is committed to identifying and meeting the needs of members and helping them succeed so that people with mental illness and addictions across Ontario can live meaningful and productive lives.

**Leading the Sector. Supporting our Members.**

In certain areas such as policy advice and advocacy, AMHO will take a clear leadership role. In other areas, such as system-level issues, AMHO will provide support for our members’ activities and input to the government.

The path to success is clear. AMHO, the addictions and mental health sector, and this Strategic Plan will succeed if we strike the proper balance between leading and supporting.

**Strategic Directions**

The AMHO Board established four broad Strategic Directions to guide the organization’s work for the next three years.

**Strategic Direction 1** - Supporting Members in their Service Delivery

**Strategic Direction 2** - Ensuring an Accessible and Comprehensive System of Care

**Strategic Direction 3** - Being a Strong, Effective Voice of Community Mental Health and Addictions

**Strategic Direction 4** - Building the Sustainability of the Association

For each Strategic Direction, AMHO has also identified specific goals where we will concentrate resources, energy and priorities, outlined below.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1**

**Supporting Members in their Service Delivery**

AMHO’s first Strategic Direction pertains to our main purpose – helping our members deliver effective services. We will achieve this direction through the following goals:

**Goal:** Strengthening member capacity in the use of quantitative information to guide decisions, allocate resources and improve service quality

**Goal:** Strengthening member capacity to provide care and support for people with mental health and addictions problems across the continuum of care, based on leading practices

**Goal:** Supporting members in minimizing overhead and other expenditures not directly associated with client service (e.g., support for accreditation, benchmarking, employee benefits and other shared services, etc.)

**Goal:** Strengthening member capacity to keep LHINs and other stakeholders informed of agency performance, quality improvement and progress toward an accessible and comprehensive system of care
Our second Strategic Direction takes a system-wide perspective and aims to ensure an accessible and comprehensive system of care. We will achieve this direction through the following goals:

**Goal:** Identifying the attributes of an accessible and comprehensive system of excellent mental health and addiction care and the outcomes to be achieved by the system

**Goal:** Ensuring that the accessible and comprehensive system of excellent mental health and addictions care is better aligned with other systems (primary care, hospitals, housing, and justice) in order to maximize client benefit

**Goal:** Implementing an evidence-informed model of care, based on principles of

- Recovery and equity
- Holding ourselves accountable for excellence
- Addressing stigma and the role of service users and their families in program planning and performance monitoring and quality improvement

**Goal:** With partners, encouraging the development of integrated community addictions and mental health performance reporting - develop indicators, performance targets and quality metrics that contribute to consistency across the sector and consistency between members and the broader health system

**Goal:** Building the capacity of the system to use evidence and data to inform care processes and to advise stakeholders on the sector’s progress in improving quality
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3
Being a Strong, Effective Voice of Community Mental Health and Addictions

Our third Strategic Direction recognizes that the community-based mental health and addictions sector needs a coherent voice that expresses compelling, evidence-based views to policymakers. We will achieve this direction through the following goals:

Goal: Ensuring that policymakers (provincial government and federal government), funders (Local Health Integration Networks, municipalities, United Way, etc.) and other stakeholders (hospitals, doctors, CSS) understand:

- The needs of individuals living with addiction and mental illness
- The role that community mental health and addiction providers play in helping clients recover and sustain their recovery
- The significance of stigma in limiting access to appropriate and effective care

Goal: Partnering with other voices in the sector to ensure that stakeholders receive clear, consistent messages

Goal: Creating tools for member agencies to demonstrate the value they create. Funders and other stakeholders need to know who is doing what for whom, to what effect and at what cost

Goal: Promoting the exchange of knowledge and views to inform policy development

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4
Building the Sustainability of the Organization

The fourth Strategic Direction emphasizes that to deliver on our mission, we must build the sustainability of our organization. We will achieve this direction through the following goals:

Goal: Developing strategies for diversifying revenue

Goal: Staying alert to policy changes and other developments that could present new revenue sources for the organization
Implementing our Plan

For this Strategic Plan to be successful, AMHO must develop a comprehensive approach to implementation, member engagement and measurement.

This work is underway.

AMHO has developed – with input from staff, members and the Board of Directors – a work plan to implement the strategic directives.

The first steps include:

• A discussion paper on the *Key Attributes of a Successful Mental Health and Addictions System*
• Increasing our communications capacity to better share our message with stakeholders, such as the broader health care sector, government leaders and officials
• Developing a set of performance indicators to measure our progress and ensure accountability and effectiveness
• A membership survey to measure how AMHO is meeting our strategic objectives. The survey will be repeated next year to determine what progress has been made

Overall, AMHO is increasing our capacity to ensure our members are kept informed of all happenings and given the opportunity to contribute their experiences and expertise into the organization’s activities. We look forward to sharing our journey with all of our members, building on our strengths.

For more information, visit addictionsandmentalhealthontario.ca
Providing leadership
Engaging partners
Speaking up

For comprehensive and accessible addictions and mental health care, and the well-being of all Ontarians.