



Addictions &
Mental Health
Ontario

Dépendances &
santé mentale
d'Ontario

TOGETHER WE CAN

INVESTING IN ADDICTION & MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES IN ONTARIO



**2020 BUDGET
SUBMISSION**



Addictions and Mental Health Ontario represents nearly 200 organizations that provide front-line addiction and mental health supports and services. Some of this work takes place in hospitals, such as the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care in Penetanguishene and Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences in Whitby, but most are community-based providers like the North Bay Recovery Home and Support & Housing-Halton.

Addictions and Mental Health Ontario members are on the ground in communities across the province, supporting Ontarians through their addiction and mental health challenges with community-based treatment, counselling, withdrawal management services, residential treatment, peer support, family support and community housing. Every year, local mental health and addiction providers help more than 300,000 Ontarians on their recovery journey.

With a commitment of \$3.8 billion in new mental health and addiction funding from the Ontario government and the establishment of the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence there is a real opportunity to effectively address the substance use, addiction and mental health crisis in Ontario.

We are calling on the government to:

- 1** Invest \$380 million annually in community-based addiction and mental health services to respond to the urgent and rising demand for care. Investment in **community-based services** and in **children and youth services** should be prioritized in this process.
- 2** Mobilize the potential of the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence to drive systematic change and establish comprehensive and connected addiction and mental health services across Ontario, inclusive of an implementation fund to support service providers to deliver new standards.
- 3** Meaningfully engage with people with lived experience, their loved ones and caregivers to direct investments and co-design a system that works best for people who need substance use, addiction and mental health services.

Invest \$380 million this year in addiction and mental health services to respond to the urgent and rising demand for addiction and mental health care.

The \$3.8 billion commitment to addiction and mental health services holds enormous promise. To realize that promise, we urge that it be invested in community-based services that are the closest and most responsive to the people they serve.

We strongly believe that there is no better return on investment than supporting child and youth mental health and addiction services because when they get the help and support that they need, it reduces demand for services throughout the rest of their lives. That is why we recommend that child and youth mental health and addiction services be a priority.

With an increase to community based services we can:

- Reduce wait times to mental health and addiction services for children and youth.
- Provide care to people with the most complex needs or concurrent disorders.
- Help combat housing insecurity and homelessness by increasing access to affordable housing, rent supplements, and offering more case management and peer support services to help people experiencing homelessness.
- Offer better access to specialized services and programs including innovative models such as Rapid Access Addiction Medicine Clinics (RAAM clinics).
- Expand access to addiction treatment including harm reduction services, withdrawal management services, community treatment and residential treatment.

There is an immediate demand for 30,000 supportive housing units in Ontario.

Investments in community-based care are effective and efficient. With better access to community care we can support people before they reach crisis levels and keep them out of hospital. We can also help to support and sustain people's wellness after hospitalization so they do not have to return to hospital. But we need to make investments now, including getting the \$3.8 billion over ten years to frontline supports and services.

Emergency Room (ER) visits for substance use conditions rose by 40%. In contrast, the overall increase in ER visits grew by only 6%.

Auditor General's Report, 2019

AMHO recommends the immediate investment of \$380 million annually into community-based mental health and addiction services to address the urgent demand for services across the continuum of care (all ages and stages).

Mobilize the potential of the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence to drive systematic change and establish a comprehensive and connected addiction and mental health system in Ontario, inclusive of an implementation fund.

It is critical that the new Centre of Excellence:

- Institutes evidence-based quality standards across the system including qualitative and quantitative data that are tied to metrics that are relevant and meaningful.
- Ensures access to an established set of core services across a continuum of care, and accessible via a stepped care model in every region of the province.
- Establishes an implementation fund to support mental health and addiction agencies to implement new system-led standards including the implementation of digital tools and solutions needed to support connecting mental health and addiction services, education and training, and the additional professionals that will be required to meet the new standards.

The steps the government is taking with Ontario Health Teams (OHT) to better integrate services around clients' needs is a critically important change. But as we continue to move ahead with health transformation, we need to ensure the foundations are there to best support OHTs to deliver mental health and addiction services locally.

More than 80% of AMHO members are involved in Ontario Health Teams.

The creation of the Centre of Excellence should help support OHTs (and local service providers) to adopt new core services, implement new models of care, and increase standardization and reporting. The Centre of Excellence should also establish an implementation fund to cover the cost of changes that may be required including training staff, hiring new staff and enabling new digital tools that might be required to meet new data and reporting standards.

AMHO recommends that the Centre of Excellence becomes the “central nervous system” for direct service providers so they can be better supported to deliver care that is aligned with best evidence and quality standards.

AMHO also recommends that the government work towards the centralized and transparent reporting of information, similar to what is currently available for cancer care. This will ensure that everyone in Ontario can get access to the information they need to make informed decisions about their care and that caregivers feel more empowered and supported in their roles.

Meaningfully engage with people with lived experience, their loved ones and caregivers to direct investments and design a system that works best for people who need substance use, addiction and mental health services.

Patients, their loved ones and caregivers who have lived experience with mental health and addiction challenges have insights that are critical to government in designing a mental health and addiction strategy. Their unique perspective, experiential evidence and innovative ideas based on actual experiences will help ensure that a mental health and addiction system is truly person-directed.

It is critical that the government ensures meaningful engagement with people who have lived/living experience (PWLE). This should include:

- A significant and empowering role for people with lived experience within or advising the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence (this might include the involvement of PWLE on the board, advisory committee or as staff within Ontario Health).
- Building skilled reference panels of PWLE and family/caregivers to inform policy and programs changes within the addiction and mental health sector.
- An enhanced integration of equitable paid peer support positions in to the mental health and substance use/addiction system.
- Specific and ongoing engagement with priority populations and groups including children and youth, Francophones and Indigenous partners.

Meaningful engagement at the system level and peer support options at direct service level fosters person-directed care to ensure every person will be recognized, appreciated and respected for the unique person they are on their unique journey. The roots of equality and inclusivity are found through engaging the people who “know what it’s like” and who can promote person directed service delivery, inform quality improvement, inform policy change and transform systems.

“ Meaningful engagement of Lived & Living Experience and Family is vital. As a system and as a society, we need to ensure a humanizing approach to care that supports an individual’s journey towards what they see as health and good quality of life. ”

*Betty-Lou Kristy, Board Member,
Person With Lived Experience*

AMHO recommends creating a truly patient-directed system by committing to meaningful collaboration with those who have lived experience, their families and their caregivers, at all stages of system transformation and care provision. This includes people who are currently struggling with substance use, as well as people who are currently living with a mental illness. It is essential that these people are co-designing and humanizing the system to ensure it works and to lead the charge in breaking down prejudice, discrimination and bias.

Addictions and Mental Health Ontario and our nearly 200 members across the province are ready to work together with government to create the addiction and mental health system our province needs.

While there is still much work to do to deliver a fully connected addiction and mental health system in Ontario, the people of Ontario require a sustained investment in services. As the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence works towards transforming our system - alongside people with lived experience - we must also continue to invest in the excellent services many providers are already offering.

By working together, we can ensure that each dollar goes directly towards much needed front-line services to support people when and where they need it most.

Spotlight on Capital Projects

Wait lists for residential treatment across Ontario are growing quickly. To address the growing demand for care we need to build more infrastructure and open new treatment beds.

There are projects across the province that are ready to be built but are waiting for government approval:

- In Ottawa, the Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre is waiting for \$8 million to build a new treatment centre that will expand care capacity by 25%.
- In Shelbourne, the Pine River Institute is waiting for \$4 million to expand treatment capacity by 30% for children and youth in Ontario.
- In Windsor, the House of Sophrosyne is waiting for \$5 million to expand treatment capacity for women by 50% in the region.

About Us

AMHO represents nearly 200 community addiction and mental health care organizations across Ontario. Our members provide services and supports that help Ontarians with their recovery, including counselling and case management, peer support and family support, employment services, overnight rehabilitation, withdrawal management, supportive housing and hospital-based programs. As the collective voice of our members, we advocate 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.

Contact Us

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