

CMHO IMPACT REPORT 2021-22





This past year was one of continued resilience for children and youth and for the child and youth mental health (CYMH) sector. Members dealt with multiple waves of the pandemic, closures, changing COVID-19 measures and resulting constraints on health human resources—a challenge which existed pre-pandemic. Despite these unprecedented pressures, combined with increasing demand and acuity in the mental health needs of children and youth, CYMH agencies continued to bolster and adapt services, and produce innovative and collaborative solutions to meet the needs of children, youth and families across the province. The pandemic did not define their response; they rose to meet the ever-increasing needs of Ontario's children and youth made worse by it.

We know the tremendous work our members do serving families across the province, and it remains our privilege to be their voice in Ontario. On their behalf, we continued to engage with sector partners, government, children and youth, families and service providers to advocate for strategic, long-term investments that advance a high quality, high-performing system of care. We also continued to seek clarity around COVID-19 measures and endeavoured to support our members with information as they did important front-line work. Further, we helped to build capacity in our sector as it evolves and grows by collaborating with partners to deliver education and resources to our members.

As we move into recovery, we know that the pandemic will have lasting effects on our sector. Together, we will continue our important work to ensure that the needs of infants, children, youth and families are met across the province.

In line with our 2020–23 Strategic Plan, our 2021–22 Impact Report aligns with the three strategic pillars that guide our work:

1 CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES
FIRST

2 QUALITY SERVICES
WITHIN A QUALITY
SYSTEM

3 MOBILIZING
FOR SUSTAINED
IMPACT



1 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FIRST

In 2021–22, we pushed for information and support on COVID-19 measures that would allow our members to do their essential work at the front lines of care. We also continued our important role as an advocate for policies and investments that expand access to care, improve equity and increase system capacity to meet the needs of children and youth with mental health challenges.

HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST YEAR:

CHILDREN'S COVID RESPONSE TABLE Working with our partners in children's health care, we were successful in advocating for a focal point within Ontario Health for children's health care and as part of this, our participation on the established Children's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Table.

VACCINE EDUCATION We partnered with the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) to fund and offer a vaccine education course for members. We also worked with OPHA to provide one-on-one question and answer support with a regulated health professional and expert. This provided a unified approach to vaccine education throughout the sector from a credible source. As part of our provincial advocacy, we continued to co-lead the Ontario Children's Vaccine Table, and developed the kidshealthfirst.ca website as a source of up-to-date information on vaccines for children five to 11.



CYMH DATA COLLECTION Working with the Lead Agencies, we engaged in our most robust data collection to date on the needs in community child and youth mental health. We received detailed reports and funding asks for each of the 33 service areas which was shared back with the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH COALITION Throughout the year, we continued to work with partners in children's health care through our [Children's Health Coalition](#) to put a spotlight on the impact of the pandemic on children's physical, developmental and mental health. As a collective, this unprecedented coming together of children's health organizations continued to advocate for the needs of children and recognition of the pandemic's disproportionate impact on them. We released official public statements in response to provincial school closures, advocating for essential in-person learning for children and youth, and statements regarding safety measures necessary to sustain in-person learning. The coalition launched a Ministry of Health-funded campaign on child vaccination addressing parent hesitancy which included TV spots, social ads and a website.



Our joint proposal, [Make Kids Count](#), is a comprehensive, cross-sectoral roadmap for province-wide change, recognizing that children's health care is delivered locally, regionally, and provincially, as well as across multiple settings. The proposal will begin to address the long wait times and backlog in surgeries, rehabilitation, imaging and mental health that have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY We held multiple meetings throughout the year with ministers and officials from the Ministry of Health, Ontario Health, and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services on COVID-19 supports for members, ongoing health human resources challenges and live-in treatment.

MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY We convened over 300 stakeholders in a series of discussions around mental health recovery that informed the Make Kids Count proposal, our pre-budget submission, and our pre-election advocacy.

MEMBER TOOLKITS We developed six member toolkits which included resources for children's mental health week, back to school, and the holiday season.

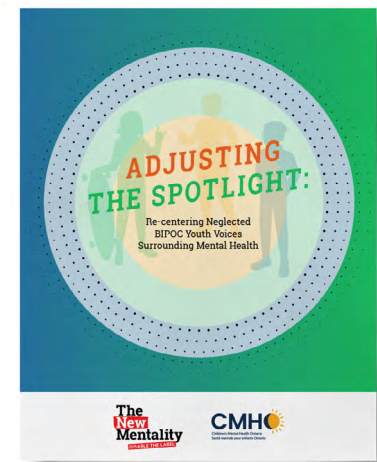


2 QUALITY SERVICES WITHIN A QUALITY SYSTEM

This year, we continued to make progress leading and supporting system and sector priorities to build quality, equity and access in community child and youth mental health. While COVID-19 exposed and exacerbated many long-standing issues for our system, we remained committed to addressing important policy matters in CYMH by collaborating at all levels to advance and improve equitable, quality care for infants, children, youth and families across the province.

WORKING WITH MEMBERS, THE LEAD AGENCY CONSORTIUM, THE KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTE ON CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS, AND OTHER PARTNERS, HERE'S HOW WE ADVANCED QUALITY SERVICES WITHIN A QUALITY SYSTEM IN 2021-2022.

ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY CMHO remains committed to addressing systemic barriers and inequities by maintaining a focus on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion both within our organization and in our sector work with members and partners. In 2021, we initiated the development of a racial health equity strategy for our sector through engagement with CMHO members, youth and families with lived experience, and other key partners through focus group discussions, interviews, and strategic planning sessions. The New Mentality's Youth Action Committee 2021 Policy Paper [Adjusting the Spotlight](#), as well as findings from an organizational scan exploring the current state of racial equity policies and practices across agencies within our sector, have been integral to informing this crucial systems work.



HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES IN CYMH In the Fall of 2021, we surveyed our members to gather data about the serious workforce challenges facing the community CYMH sector amid growing demand and need for service. Based on the findings of our report, [Addressing Workforce Challenges in Child and Youth Mental Health](#), CMHO put forth a set of recommendations focused on building policy and strategies that support recruitment and retention as a part of a workforce strategy.

HEALTH SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION AND INTEGRATION

In Fall 2021, we hosted a webinar with Ontario Health as a first step to creating opportunities for shared learning and dialogue on how to optimize the integration of child and youth mental health within emerging structures of Ontario Health Teams (OHTs). Following the webinar, we launched a survey with member agencies to better understand the landscape of their OHT engagement and experience to date and will use the results to inform our next steps with members and government partners.

BETTER TOGETHER We supported the development of [Better Together](#), the 2021 Provincial Priorities Report of the Lead Agency Consortium advancing provincial priorities in CYMH, including Access to Care, Perception of Care, Common Assessment and Live-In Treatment Services.

RIGHT TIME, RIGHT CARE In partnership with the Lead Agency Consortium, the Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions and School Mental Health Ontario, we supported the development of [Right Time, Right Care: Strengthening Ontario's Mental Health & Addictions System of Care](#) rooted in the foundations of systems of care. This report lays the groundwork for identifying best practices for collaboration between the CYMH sector and the education sector, with the goal of collectively improving outcomes for Ontario's children and youth.





3 MOBILIZING FOR SUSTAINED IMPACT

As we continued to navigate challenging times, we worked with members to identify, build, and evolve key capacity-building initiatives that will ensure our sector is equipped with the skills and knowledge to best support kids and families.

HERE'S HOW WE MOBILIZED FOR SUSTAINED IMPACT IN 2021-22:

ANNUAL CMHO CONFERENCE Once again, we offered our annual conference in a virtual format, with the theme of “Crossroads: Re-imagining better mental health care for kids and families.” We hosted more than 11 sessions joined by over 2000 participants. Recordings and slides were shared among participants including Executive Directors, clinical leads and front-line service providers.



COVID RECOVERY AND EQUITY WEBINARS

We partnered to deliver several webinars on COVID-19 recovery for CYMH with the Knowledge Institute in Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions.

Additionally, we developed a four-part equity webinar series, hosting important discussions on the impact of systemic racism on Black, Indigenous, and racialized individuals and communities. Topics included Health Equity and Anti-Black Racism and Health Equity and Anti-Indigenous Racism, with over 200 participants attending both webinars.

BUILDING INTEGRATED CAPACITY IN AUTISM AND MENTAL HEALTH

We surveyed public and private mental health and autism providers across the province to assess and understand providers' attitudes, knowledge, confidence, and training needs to support and treat autistic children and youth with mental health needs. These surveys will support us to develop and deliver bilingual service provider training to autism and mental health providers. The training will build both sectors' capacity in delivering integrated mental health services for autistic children and youth.

INTENSIVE TREATMENT In partnership with the Lead Agency Consortium, we launched phase one of the Provincial Training Initiative. Our vision is to ensure children and youth with complex and significant mental health needs will have consistent access to appropriate evidence-based, intensive treatment services within their communities. Resources and tools were developed to support all lead agencies and their core service providers, organized into training networks, to receive training in treatment modalities most appropriate for children and youth with complex and significant mental health needs in their communities.



FAMILY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS As part of our Parents for Children's Mental Health program, we launched our new Family Care Centre website, family.cmho.org, which brings together resources for parents and caregivers of children with mental health issues as well as information on peer support groups. We developed a [Mental Health Backpack](#) with a suite of resources dedicated to helping parents manage stress through the return to school. and launched a new “ask an expert” video series for parents.



THE NEW MENTALITY

This year, The New Mentality continued the visioning, planning and direction of our anti-racism and equity work for the network. This was done through hosting our BIPOC Affinity Group, a space for racialized youth to engage in meaningful dialogue around their lived experiences and the impacts of racism within the sector. As well, The New Mentality hosted an eight-week leadership program called Rainbow Connections where 2SLGBTQ+ youth developed a youth-led training to help allies better understand how they can be advocates for 2SLGBTQ+ youth mental health. These conversations culminated in our third virtual Disable the Label (DTL) leadership retreat where youth organizers, leaders and adult allies came together to share, learn, and explore their identities as it relates to their mental health and wellness.



YOUTH JUSTICE ONTARIO

Youth Justice Ontario (YJO) is an association that represents 46 agencies that provide services to youth involved in the youth justice system. Given the intersection of the law and mental health, 40 per cent of the agencies are also CMHO members. In September we signed a memorandum of understanding which will see YJO become a program of CMHO to continue their important work including development of a Youth Justice Advisory Committee, which provides guidance pertaining to this transition.

Thank you to our members for their tireless work on behalf of children and families across the province. At CMHO, we are inspired by your commitment and look forward to continuing to work together to ensure children and youth get the mental health treatment they need and deserve, at the right place and at the right time.

cmho.org

