



PUTTING KIDS' MENTAL HEALTH

FORWARD
THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

THROUGH THE PANDEMIC



The past year has demonstrated the collective strength of Ontario's child and youth mental health sector. Throughout this year, members adapted in innovative ways in response to the ever-evolving COVID-19 pandemic to provide essential mental health services to the infants, children, youth and families across Ontario.

Together, we have made great progress, but we know that our voice on behalf of kids and families has never been more important. Significant barriers exist for children, youth and families who require mental health treatment – and these barriers are even higher for those with the most serious illness, those who are racialized, those who are marginalized and those with disabilities.

CMHO will continue 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 for all kids and families. As we look towards the next provincial and federal elections, we'll continue ramping up our #kidscantwait advocacy to ensure that these strategic investments and policies are on political agendas.

Through a most trying year, our members have remained resilient and adaptive. On their behalf, our goal remains the same – ensuring the kids and families of Ontario have equitable access to quality mental health care, when and where they need it.

NOW MORE THAN EVER, KIDS CAN'T WAIT.

In line with our 2020-23 Strategic Plan, we have aligned our 2020-21 Impact Report around 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

Building on the success of previous years, we continued to push for policies and investments that expanded access to care, improved equity and increased system capacity to meet the needs of all children and youth with mental health challenges, regardless of who they are, what needs they have or where they live. Since 2018, our collective advocacy has resulted in nearly \$80M in new annualized funding for community child and youth mental health services.

INVESTMENTS IN COMMUNITY CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

GTA

'We've got to get ready.' Province urged to boost support for children's mental health services as demand grows amid the pandemic

= **\$83M**
ESTIMATED TOTAL

\$20M + \$10M + \$12M + \$10M + \$31M

Summer 2018

Spring 2019

Fall 2020

Winter 2021

Summer 2021

5% base budget increase for community child and youth mental health providers

In year new base funding

As a part of the provincial governments Roadmap to Wellness, \$11 million was invested into the sector, with an additional \$1 million for secure treatment facilities

A combination of expanded secure treatment capacity as well as base funding for secure treatment centres

Another 5% base budget increase, as well as \$11 million for special initiatives, including 4 new youth wellness hubs, a provincial virtual walk-in clinic and expanded step up step down programs

HERE'S HOW WE PUT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FIRST IN 2020/2021:

- Based on our members expertise and guidance and the expressed needs in the sector, our advocacy work resulted in new funding in 2020/2021 for community child and youth mental health services including:

\$10M

for secure treatment
services

\$43M

in new annualized funding
for the sector

\$32.5M

in one-time COVID-19
funding

ACCORDING
TO A SICKKIDS
SURVEY,

70%

OF YOUTH REPORTED THEIR
MENTAL HEALTH WORSENERED
DURING THE FIRST WAVE
OF THE PANDEMIC

- In collaboration with our members and other organizations in the sector, we created and participated in four working groups, including a pandemic recovery working group, a vaccine planning working group, a community-school pathways working group, and an autism and mental health working group to continue to advocate on behalf of all kids and youth, regardless of need.
- Throughout the year, we worked 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. Through this ongoing partnership we:
 - Held a virtual Kids in Crisis Town Hall in October 2020 hosted by CBC's Rita Celli and attended by The Honourable Christine Elliott, Minister of Health
 - Penned multiple letters and official statements in response to provincial school closures, advocating that in-person learning is an essential service for kids and youth, and that school doors should be the last to close and the first to open
 - Wrote three Op-Eds in partnership with our sector allies, calling for more support for children and youth during the first wave of the pandemic

- With our partners in lifespan mental health and addiction we successfully launched the Everything is not OK campaign to call on the Ontario government to develop a fully funded mental health and addiction wait times strategy.
- To help further advance family partnerships, engagement and peer support in child and youth mental health, Parents for Children's Mental Health became a program of CMHO.
- Working with Parents for Children's Mental Health and The New Mentality we continued to incorporate and amplify the voice and expertise of youth and families in our networks, as key advocates and partners in the sector.
- Hosted over five Twitter chats to engage policy makers, service providers, parents and youth in a conversation on children's mental health:

➤ In March 2020 our Twitter chat on coping through COVID-19 resulted in **over 11 million impressions** and over 2,500 tweets

➤ In September 2020 our Twitter chat on Back to School generated **over 800 tweets in support of Kids Can't Wait**

➤ In May of 2021 our Twitter chat on race, mental health and the pandemic generated **nearly 6 million impressions**





2 **QUALITY SERVICES WITHIN A QUALITY SYSTEM**

This year, our collective efforts facilitated the delivery of high-quality services, alongside continued advocacy for an easy to navigate high-performing, accountable and integrated system.

WORKING WITH MEMBERS, THE LEAD AGENCY CONSORTIUM, THE ONTARIO CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH, AND OTHER PARTNERS, HERE'S HOW CMHO ADVANCED QUALITY SERVICES WITHIN A QUALITY SYSTEM IN 2020/2021:

- **Advancing Health Equity:** Ongoing through this year and moving forward is our commitment to expanding capacity in our sector to ensure that mental health services are accessible and appropriately meet the needs of kids and families from racialized and low-income communities.
- This year, in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, we launched our organizational survey Advancing Racial Equity Together to explore the current state of racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategies and identify opportunities to develop resources and supports to advance racial equity and diversity within our sector and better serve all kids and families in Ontario.
- **Intensive Treatment:** We are collaborating with the Lead Agency Consortium to implement a new intensive quality improvement program that will enable clinicians to have the training they need to serve kids with the most complex issues.
- **Building integrated capacity in autism and mental health:** Through collaboration with our members and partners, we kickstarted work to address and increase sector capacity in the delivery of care to children with co-occurring Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and mental health needs. We launched the organizational survey, Building Integrated Capacity in Autism and Mental Health, to support the development of training and up-skilling our sector's ability to serve kids with autism and mental health.





➤ Partnering on research and evidence, including:

1. A **collaborative study** between Addictions and Mental Health Ontario and Ipsos sought to understand the impact of the first wave on the mental health of Ontarians of all ages.
2. In partnership with the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, we developed a **COVID-19 return to school report** to support service providers with preparations to support the new needs of young people as the 2020 school year began.
3. A **scoping survey** for families and parents to gauge how families feel about sending their kids back to school.
4. An **evidence brief** summarizing the impact of the pandemic on child and youth mental health.

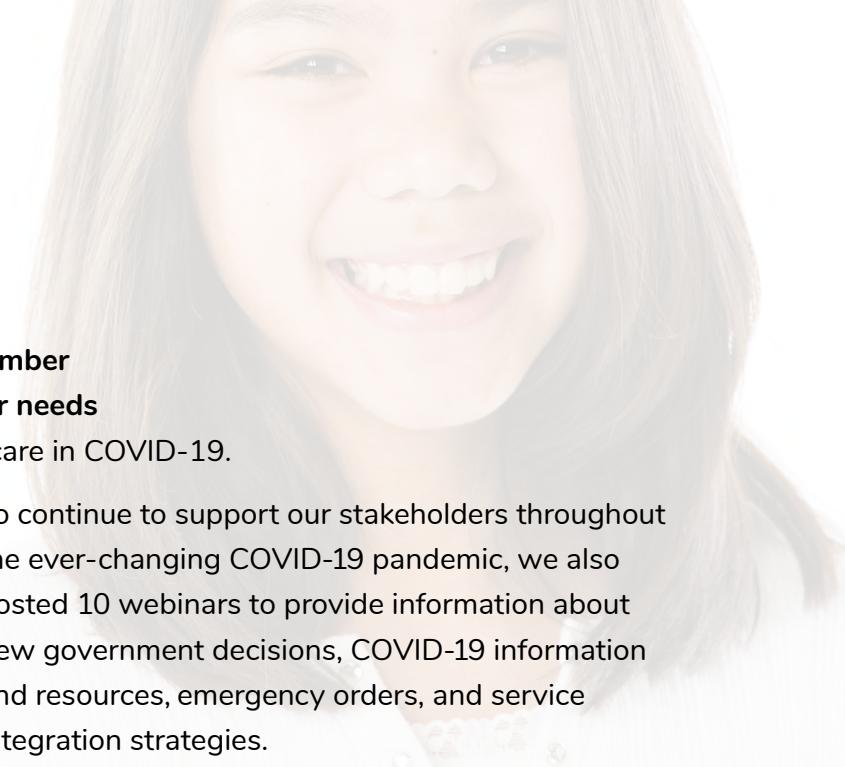




3 MOBILIZING FOR SUSTAINED IMPACT

The wealth of expertise and innovation embedded in our membership shone through this year through difficult transitions and adaptations. For some, this meant complete pivots to a virtual model. We continue to leverage and amplify the experience and expertise of our membership as they further our sector's reputation as leaders in the child and youth mental health system.

CMHA Waterloo Wellington receives \$1M to support youth mental health



- This year, in an effort to adapt to our new circumstances, we **hosted over 40 member teleconferences to leverage member expertise and share information on sector needs** including live-in and secure treatment, the impact of school closures and virtual care in COVID-19.
- These regular teleconferences allowed for inter-agency exchange and permitted us to hear firsthand from our members about their concerns and need for increased capacity which informed our calls to government.
- To continue to support our stakeholders throughout the ever-changing COVID-19 pandemic, we also hosted 10 webinars to provide information about new government decisions, COVID-19 information and resources, emergency orders, and service integration strategies.
- We continued to mobilize the voices of key partners and created opportunities for the sector to come together to learn, innovate and advance key priorities. This included pivoting to deliver annual in-person events like our annual conference to a virtual format.
- This year, The New Mentality also worked to adapt their annual Disable the Label (DTL) leadership retreat for youth advocates into the virtual space.
- Since 2007, The New Mentality has hosted a leadership retreat for youth organizers, youth leaders and adult allies to gather, learn, share and build meaningful connections and 2020 was no exception. DTL was transformed into an 8-week virtual leadership program to be responsive to the needs of the network – built to foster a community of support around the first wave of the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement.



**The
New
Mentality**
DISABLE THE LABEL

GTA
Pressure mounts to reopen intensive mental health treatment beds for youth in the justice system

Thank you to our members for another year of great collaboration together on behalf of kids and families across Ontario. Your innovation and dedication inspire and motivate us in our work every day.

There is a lot of work ahead to improve quality, equity and access in child and youth mental health. We look forward to another year working together towards our mission of ensuring all kids and young people get the mental health treatment they need within a high-performing system.

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