

Stabilize. Sustain. System-Build.

REFLECTIONS AND LOOKING AHEAD: MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

As we move out of the pandemic lockdowns, kids' mental health has never been more important. The mental health needs of Ontario's infants, children, youth, and families are greater, more complex, and more widespread. Significant gaps in services and inequities persist, in particular for children and youth who are racialized, those who live in Northern, rural, and remote communities, those with complex or concurrent needs and for Indigenous communities.

Community child and youth providers have worked hard to continue to meet the growing demand for services and address these gaps. At CMHO, we are continually amazed by the innovation in our sector and the dedication to always putting kids and families first. However, we also know that significant workforce shortages, challenges retaining our specialized staff, and decades of chronic underfunding are simply coming to a head at a time where we are facing unprecedented demand.

A focus of the past year for CMHO has been on starting to bring stability to our sector as we lay the foundations for sustainability and system-building. A five percent increase in new funding in the 2023 Ontario Budget was a big win for all of us—a result of our collective and continued advocacy over many, many years.

Going forward, we will continue to raise youth and family voices, to support our members, and to galvanize government and system partners on our work together to build a child and youth mental health system that provides timely, equitable access to high quality care for all Ontario families.

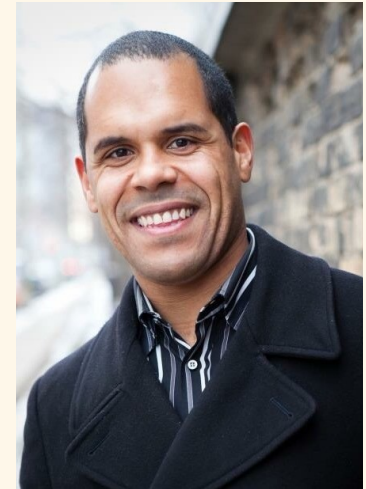
– Tatum Wilson, CEO

In line with our 2020–23 Strategic Plan, our 2022–23 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**



Tatum Wilson [was appointed as the new CEO](#) of CMHO on April 11, 2022. He joins the team with over 20 years of experience in multiple health and social policy environments, including government, academic health science centres, and advocacy organizations. He is a passionate promoter of equity and social justice issues and a leader in community engagement, communications, and advocacy.



1 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FIRST

Building on the success of previous years, we continue to push for policies and investments that expand access to care, improve equity, and increase 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.

HERE'S HOW WE PUT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FIRST IN 2022-23:

5% BASE FUNDING INCREASE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

As a result of our collective advocacy, we were able to secure 5% in new funding for community child and youth mental health agencies in the [provincial budget](#). This funding will help begin to provide stability for providers to minimize service disruptions and retain their qualified staff. As important as this new funding is, we know much work remains. We remain committed to raising the voices of children, youth, and families and to continue pushing for investments that improve quality, address inequities, and ensure timely access to care.



Ministry of Finance @ONfinance · Mar 23

The government is challenging the status quo to provide convenient and easy to access services for you, from health care to child care, transit and justice services.

ontario.ca/budget

"Providing an additional **\$425 million** over three years to support mental health and addictions services, including a **five per cent increase in the base funding** of community-based mental health and addictions service providers funded by the Ministry of Health."



PROVINCIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO "TAKE THE #KIDSCANTWAIT PLEDGE"



Last year, we called on Ontario party leaders and candidates to sign the pledge to make Ontario the top jurisdiction in Canada for access to child and youth mental health supports. Together with members, youth, and families, we raised our voices, engaged with media, and got loud on social media to ensure child and youth mental health was a top election issue for all parties.

[Watch Tatum on TVO's The Agenda:](#)

"Is Mental Health Finally an Election Issue?"

#KidsCantWait

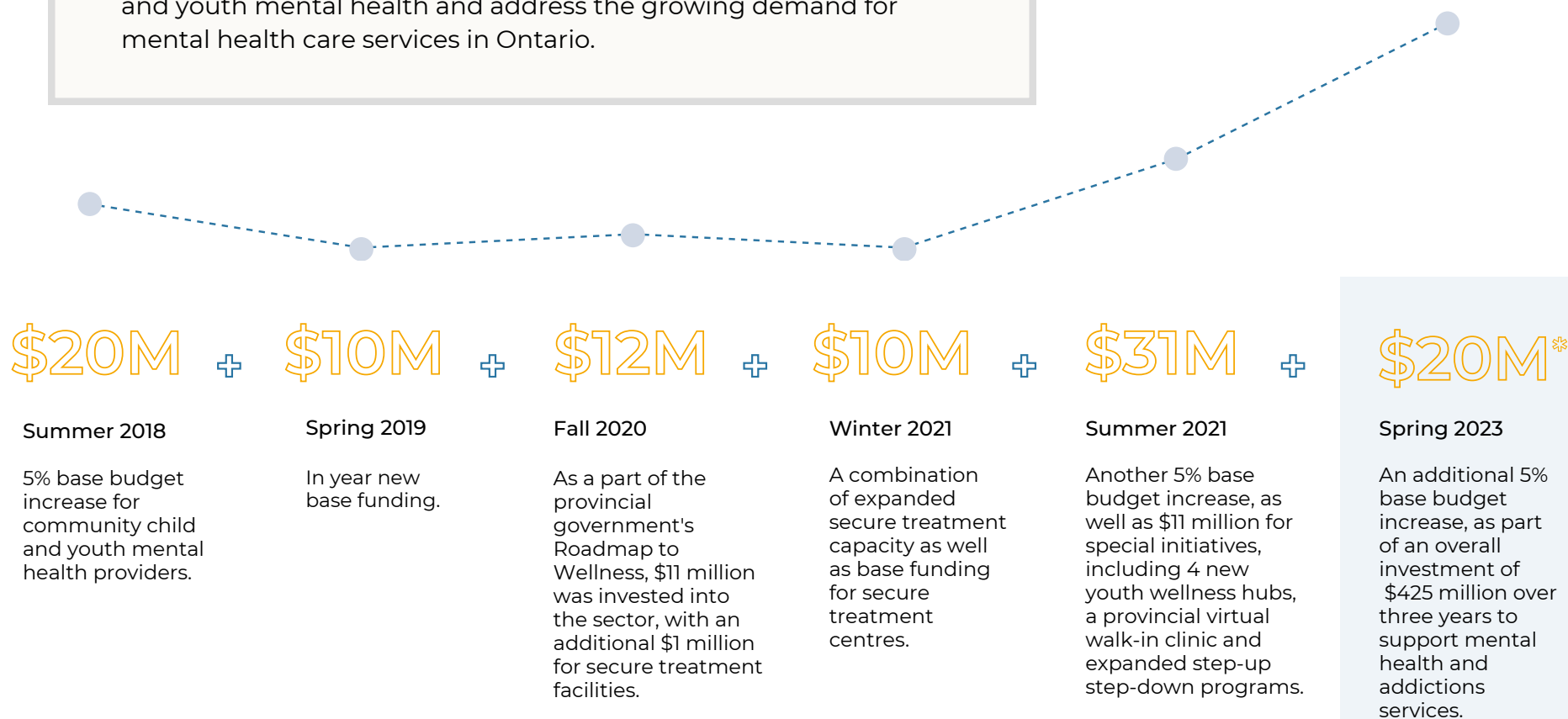
INVESTMENTS IN COMMUNITY CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH



Children's Mental Health Ontario
@kidsmenthlth

These investments are critical to begin to stabilize community child and youth mental health and address the growing demand for mental health care services in Ontario.

= \$100+ M
Estimated Total



*This amount is an estimate based on the 5% base funding increase.

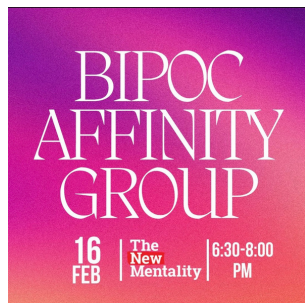
ADVOCACY WITH THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH COALITION TO MAKE KIDS COUNT

Throughout the year, we continued to partner with children's hospitals and the community rehabilitation and development sector to call on government to invest in children's physical, developmental, and mental health. We submitted a proposal to government to "[Make Kids Count](#)" and called for them to partner with us to right-size the pediatric health care system in Ontario. This resulted in a commitment in the provincial budget to *"allocate additional funding and work with frontline pediatric health partners to identify more ways to connect children and youth to the care they need."*



RAISING YOUTH VOICES TO IMPACT CHANGE

**The
New
Mentality**



BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) Affinity Group

The New Mentality (TNM) has continued to meet monthly with their BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) Affinity Group for a second year in a row! The purpose of the BIPOC affinity group is to build trust and meaningful relationships with BIPOC network members, provide leadership skills, and understand the experiences of BIPOC youth. Topics for our discussions have centered around breaking cultural barriers, how cultures display love, embracing our culture and identities, the beauty of our names, the importance of rest as racialized advocates, and more!



Rainbow Connections – 2SLGBTQ+ Leadership Program & Workshop

Our 2SLGBTQ+ leadership program, Rainbow Connections, began its 11-week program in January 2023. Rainbow Connections is a space for 2SLGBTQ+ youth to share stories, connect with other 2SLGBTQ+ youth in the network, and explore what they think is most important for the sector to understand about 2SLGBTQ+ youth mental health advocacy. Rainbow Connections participants shared stories, learned about queer history, and planned and executed a workshop for the TNM network. The workshop offered tips for supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth mental health and facilitated discussions around systems and intersecting identities and experiences.

RAISING YOUTH VOICES (CONTINUED)

Disable the Label

In July, TNM hosted our Disable the Label (DTL) retreat. Last year's focus for DTL was to continue our anti-racism and equity work and provide a space for youth to process, reflect, and develop strategies for their wellness as we transition back to in-person programming. Each session of the four-day retreat focused on creating programming for our network to explore different aspects of their identities and the unique experiences these intersections create within the mental health sector. The theme this year was "finding our inner hero," which emphasized the importance of identifying strengths of youth and identifying existing available resources across the province.



Youth Action Committee Reflection Guide

The Youth Action Committee (YAC) completed their fourth policy cycle this past year. The YAC focused on implementing a strategic plan to disseminate their policy paper, [Adjusting the Spotlight: Re-centering Neglected BIPOC Youth Voices Surrounding Mental Health](#). The plan included outreach and engagement with youth, adult allies, and community members across the province. Through this campaign, youth highlighted the need for more training and capacity building of service providers, integration of anti-racism and anti-oppressive frameworks into the school system, more diverse and culturally appropriate mental health services, and race-based data collection as key areas for improvement. The YAC released a follow-up reflection document to their policy paper in [English](#) and [French](#), which includes questions that will serve as an additional resource to guide organizations and individuals to reflect on their anti-racism work.



Recommendation #2: Hire more diverse service providers and allow youth to make requests for specific providers.

The YAC also continued to promote their **Living in Shades and Tones Art Contest**, which asked youth from across the province to share their artistic expressions of what race and mental health looks or feels like to them or what they would like to see change in the sector. Many profound submissions were received, and two individuals received prizes for their [written](#) and [visual](#) category submissions.

STRENGTHENING FAMILY CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUPPORT THROUGH PEER-TO-PEER PROGRAMMING



Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH) supports **20 peer-to-peer chapters** and **30 volunteer chapter leaders** supporting families across the province. We continue to grow our chapters based on geographical location and other shared lived experiences.

In 2022–23, PCMH established **five new chapters** (Toronto, London, Kingston, Windsor and a Care-Provider focused chapter), added a second monthly meeting, and created a weekly faith-based chapter in Chatham-Kent where all faiths are welcome. Chapter leaders supported 350 individuals during the monthly peer support meetings, 60 of whom were new families. In addition, PCMH volunteers provided 560 hours of one-on-one peer support outside of the monthly meetings.

PCMH continues to build its relationships with community partners to engage families across Ontario through a monthly webinar series. PCMH invites child and youth mental health partners to collaborate and deliver webinars to support families on their journey. Some of our webinar topics this year included: substance use and addictions, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, dialectical behavioural therapy, co-parenting a child with mental illness, aggression towards family and caregivers in childhood and adolescence, the individual education plan in high school, managing screen time, and more. These webinars were rated at 81% effectiveness based on evaluation responses and have reached over 250 families.

20

PEER SUPPORT
CHAPTERS

5

NEW CHAPTERS
IN 2022–23

560

HOURS OF 1:1
PEER SUPPORT

"I have been advocating on behalf of my niece for many years, and I never came across an organization who sees things from my perspective. I always thought I was alone! What a breath of fresh air."





2 QUALITY SERVICES WITHIN A QUALITY SYSTEM

Working with members, the Lead Agency Consortium, the Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions, and other partners, 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.

HERE'S HOW WE ADVANCED QUALITY SERVICES WITHIN A QUALITY SYSTEM IN 2022–23:

ADVANCING SOLUTIONS TO THE URGENT WORKFORCE CHALLENGES IN CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Delivering quality services for Ontario's children, youth, and families requires a stable and strong workforce. This is why CMHO has prioritized policy and advocacy initiatives to address the long-standing health human resource (HHR) and workforce challenges in the community child and youth mental health sector. These challenges (e.g., increasing vacancies, lack of wage parity, staff recruitment and retention issues) have had significant consequences such as increasing wait times, increasing demands and pressure (on acute care as well), and fragmentation in quality care.

Our member based HHR Working Group (launched in September 2022) has been critical to drawing attention to the urgent need for both short and long-term solutions for the sector. The working group led a roundtable with Minister Tibollo in March 2023 where we discussed opportunities and recommendations on how government and community child and youth mental health can work together to resolve these issues.

CMHO has also worked with members to participate in a mental health and addictions sector salary survey, and this data will be informative to our continued advocacy. In coming months, CMHO will also launch an updated **Workforce Report**, as a companion document to [our original workforce report](#) from March 2022. This report will put forth a robust set of recommendations for stabilizing, sustaining, and building the sector workforce.

KEY FINDINGS/OBSERVATIONS

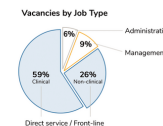
Approximately 76% of CMHO members responded to the workforce survey through a series of both quantitative and qualitative questions. 92% of respondents indicated that they were experiencing vacancies currently in their agency, while 83% reported they were experiencing a staffing shortage. Key findings have been summarized around vacancies, recruitment and retention challenges, and impacts of HHR challenges.

Clinical Vacancies Account for the Majority of Vacancies Reported

The majority of staff vacancies reported are for clinical direct service/front-line positions.

Clinical staff are qualified mental health professionals, such as psychotherapists and social workers, that work in an interdisciplinary team and make assessments about a child/youth's mental health needs and provide clinical treatment and services. This can include brief services, counselling and therapy, crisis support services, and intensive treatment services. Clinical staff also support and educate families through family capacity building and support.

Agencies were asked to indicate how many positions were currently vacant among management, direct service/front-line clinical and non-clinical and administration. There were 628 vacancies reported across 4 job types at the time of the survey. Among responses, more than half (59%) account for clinical direct service vacancies and they commonly take an average of 8 weeks to fill. The full picture shows that 85% of all vacancies were for direct service / front-line vacancies, both clinical and non-clinical positions with the remaining in management and administration.



Top Recruitment and Retention Challenges

It has become increasingly challenging to attract and retain mental health professionals in the community CYMH sector. The effects of the pandemic coupled with increasing severity of mental health concerns have exacerbated pre-existing system issues like wage disparities with other sectors, burnout in care professions and retirement waves, for example. Without a sufficient workforce, children, youth and families experience longer wait times. Any service gap impacts access to treatment and mental health outcomes.

92% of respondents reported that wage discrepancies exist in their local area between CYMH and other sectors. The most frequent factors reported impacting both recruitment and retention were wages/salary and total compensation. These factors are partially due to compensation disparities with other sectors within and outside of the healthcare system. The average estimate of the wage/salary discrepancy (%) reported between CYMH and other sectors for direct service clinical positions ranged from 19% to 34%. The average estimated wage discrepancy reported with schools and hospitals was relatively similar around 20%.

Top 3 Recruitment Challenges

- Wages/Salary
- Total compensation (including vacation/sick days, pension, bonus)
- Lack of individuals with the required professional training or designation to support services/programs

Top 3 Retention Challenges

- Wages/Salary
- Total compensation (including vacation/sick days, pension, bonus)
- Staff leaving the sector to deliver private clinical services

March 2022 2

IMPROVING QUALITY IN INTENSIVE TREATMENT THROUGH THE PROVINCIAL TRAINING INITIATIVE

The Provincial Training Initiative (PTI) is a multi-year, collaborative project between the Lead Agency Consortium, CMHO, and the Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions. 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.

PTI will increase the number of child and youth mental health clinicians trained to deliver evidence-based treatment services designed for children and youth with complex and significant mental health needs. Our Phase One Training Network completed training in Trauma-Focused CBT and the Attachment, Regulation, and Competency (ARC) Framework. We also established eight additional training networks across the province, representing 19 lead agencies.



Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth
Mental Health and Addictions
Institut du savoir sur la santé mentale et les
dépendances chez les enfants et les jeunes



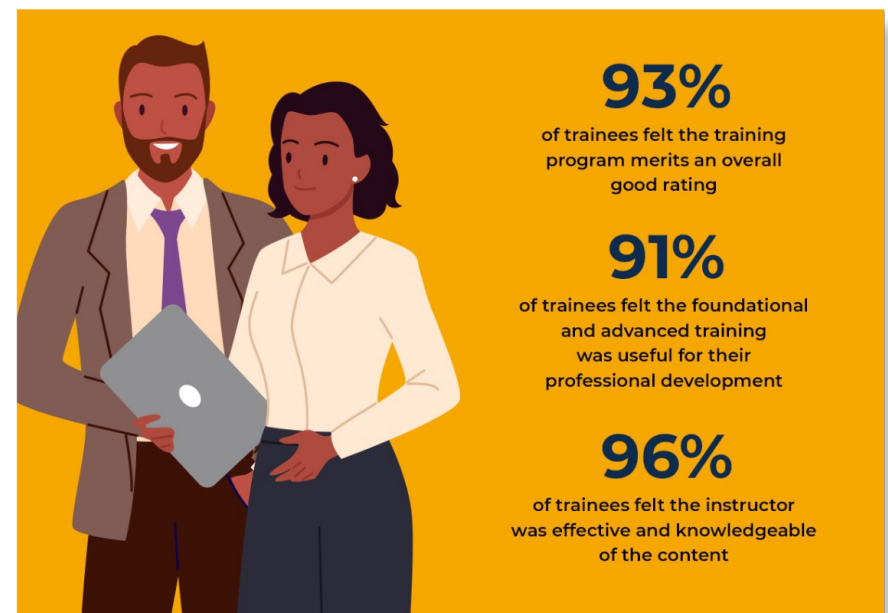
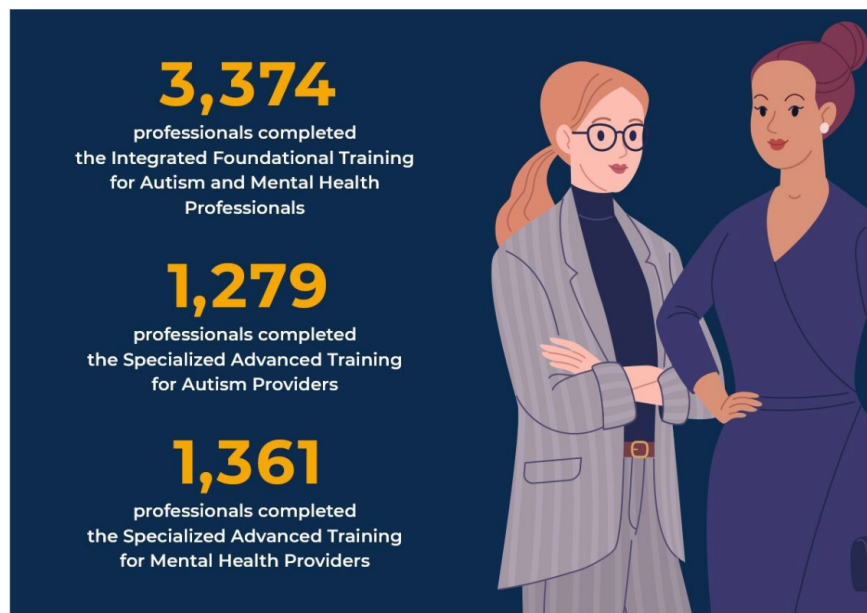
DEVELOPING A SECTOR EQUITY STRATEGY

Advancing equity in the community child and youth mental health sector remains a key priority for CMHO. This work addresses systemic barriers and inequities and the impacts they have on specific populations, including racialized and under-served communities. Since 2021, we have worked closely with members, sector partners (including the Lead Agency Consortium and the Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions or “Knowledge Institute”), as well as children, youth, and families, to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives. This includes the development of a racial health equity strategy for our sector; this strategy has been a collaborative effort, informed by research (through the Knowledge Institute), critical conversation and dialogue, lived expertise, and member consultations.

In parallel to this strategy development, CMHO has also completed a second year of hosting a monthly **equity Community or Practice (CoP)** for member agencies. These monthly discussions foster regular discussion, resource sharing, and organizational and personal reflections on equity-related issues amongst senior leadership in the sector. CMHO will continue to host these sessions for our members. Beyond the CoP, CMHO remains committed to exploring additional learning and strategies that can advance equity in child and youth mental health.

BUILDING INTEGRATED CAPACITY FOR BETTER SUPPORTING AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH CO-OCCURRING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

CMHO, in partnership with Autism Ontario and Dr. Jonathan Weiss, developed a provincial training program to build both sectors' capacity in delivering integrated mental health services for autistic children and youth. These virtual foundational and advanced training sessions were designed to help enhance providers' expertise in treating and supporting autistic children and youth with mental health challenges and their families.



“Great presentation overall. I really enjoyed the practicality of the material. So often we are presented with theory-heavy trainings, and it was great to get concrete ideas on how to best support autistic folks.” – *Foundational Training Participant*

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POSITIONING COMMUNITY CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FOR SUCCESS THROUGH HEALTH SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

Since early 2019, CMHO has been monitoring Ontario's health system transformation and the development of the Ontario Health Team (OHT) model as part of that transformation. Wherever possible, we have provided information and support to members as this key government initiative has evolved. This includes a [recent presentation](#) at our CMHO virtual conference in January on how to optimize health system transformation for the child and youth mental health sector. More recently, CMHO worked with members to launch an [Insights Report on Ontario Health Teams and Community Child and Youth Mental Health](#) in April 2023. This report provides foundational knowledge on OHTs, in addition to providing learnings from the early experiences of member agencies who are currently engaging with OHTs in their region. The report is a key first step for CMHO and members in navigating further discussion and planning for the impacts of integration on child and youth mental health and how to optimize this opportunity to support the advancement of our sector. CMHO will continue to monitor transformation efforts and work with members to position our sector for success in the long-term.

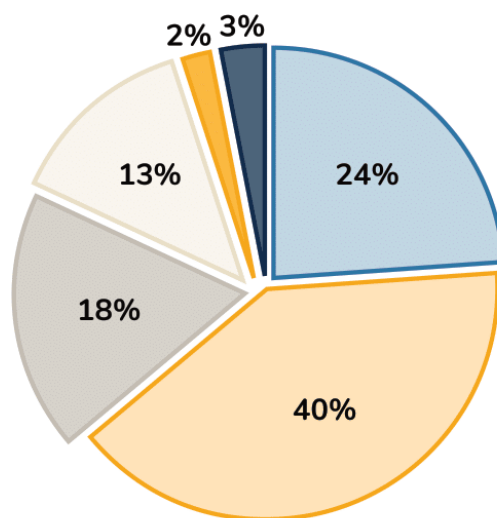








Figure 1: CYMH Involvement with OHTs

-  We are not involved with any OHTs
-  We are involved with only 1 OHT
-  We are involved with 2 OHTs
-  We are involved with 3 or more OHTs
-  Not sure
-  Other/Additional Details



3 MOBILIZING FOR SUSTAINED IMPACT

As we navigated through pandemic re-opening, we worked with members to support the sector and to continue to raise our voices as thought leaders and experts in child and youth mental health.

A big thank you to the Cowan Foundation for supporting child and youth mental health over the past three years. CMHO is so grateful to be the recipient of your support. Thanks to the Cowan Foundation, we have been able to sustain and grow our family supports, family psycho-educational resources, and our peer to peer programs through Parents for Children's Mental Health.

HERE'S HOW WE MOBILIZED FOR SUSTAINED IMPACT IN 2022-23:

CONVENING SYSTEM LEADERS IN CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

A key priority for CMHO is to support our member child and youth mental health agencies and collaborate to share knowledge and advance positive systems change. We continued to convene executive directors and senior leaders in our sector, with a focus this past year on the following key topics:

- Health human resources and workforce challenges
- Pandemic recovery and hybrid working
- Advancing health equity at an organizational and systems level
- Government advocacy

WE FACILITATED

8

LEADERSHIP
EXCHANGES

WE OFFERED

10

WEBINARS

WE CREATED

3

ADVOCACY
TOOLKITS

2023 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Connecting the dots: Learning and reflecting together

In the face of unique challenges and pressures experienced by our mental health system over the last year, our leaders and communities have adapted, pivoted and responded to meet the needs of children, young people, and families. While innovation has surfaced in many unique ways, there was still a need to learn and reflect about existing gaps and challenges as we continue towards our vision that all children and young people get the treatment they need within a high performing system. In [this year's conference](#), we took a moment to reflect and connect the dots by exploring and unpacking a number of leading system and sector topics. Over 700 attendees tuned into 10 sessions that helped us connect the dots and learn together.



Thank you to our members
for your 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 all infants,
children, youth, and families
get the mental health
services and treatment they
need and deserve, at the right
place and at the right time.