



Stabilize. Sustain. System-Build.

CMHO Impact Report
2023–24

REFLECTIONS AND LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR WHAT'S NEXT – MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

As we share our recap of the final year of CMHO's current strategic plan, I am struck by how far we have come together and humbled and optimistic about the work that remains ahead. When we first embarked on the journey laid out by our strategic plan, nobody knew we were months away from a global pandemic. It is within that context that the accomplishments we have made together—members, youth, families, and partners—are even more remarkable.



We have demonstrated the power of a strong, compelling message of working together in collaboration, relentlessly advocating with and on behalf of our members, and profiling youth and family voices. Together, we have succeeded in securing historic new investments of over \$150 million in community-based child and youth mental health.

In many ways, we are only getting started. We know much work remains to ensure infants, children, youth, and families have access to equitable and timely treatment and supports that will help them thrive. We have a solid foundation to build on, and I look forward to beginning our next chapter together as we undertake the work to support our 2024–27 strategic plan.

– Tatum Wilson, CEO

In line with our 2020–24 Strategic Plan, our 2023–24 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

Building on the success of previous years, we continued 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 2023–24:

PARTNERING TO #MAKEKIDSCOUNT WITH AN HISTORIC \$330 MILLION INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE SERVICES

As a result of our advocacy with members and with the [Children's Health Coalition](#), we were able to secure the [single largest investment in children's health care](#) in the province's history.

This investment was particularly significant because it was a recognition from the government that we can't silo and compartmentalize children's or service systems—if we want to succeed, investments need to be made across community and hospital settings, as well as across the integrated mental, physical, and developmental needs of infants, children, youth, and families.



Notably, this investment included [\\$44.6 million for community-based child and youth mental health](#), with a focus on intensive services. This is a critical recognition of the long-standing gaps in our system, particularly related to children and families with serious mental illness. Partnering with the Lead Agency Consortium and the Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions, our sector has a critical opportunity to demonstrate leadership and transform the delivery of intensive treatment through the Ontario Intensive Treatment Pathway.



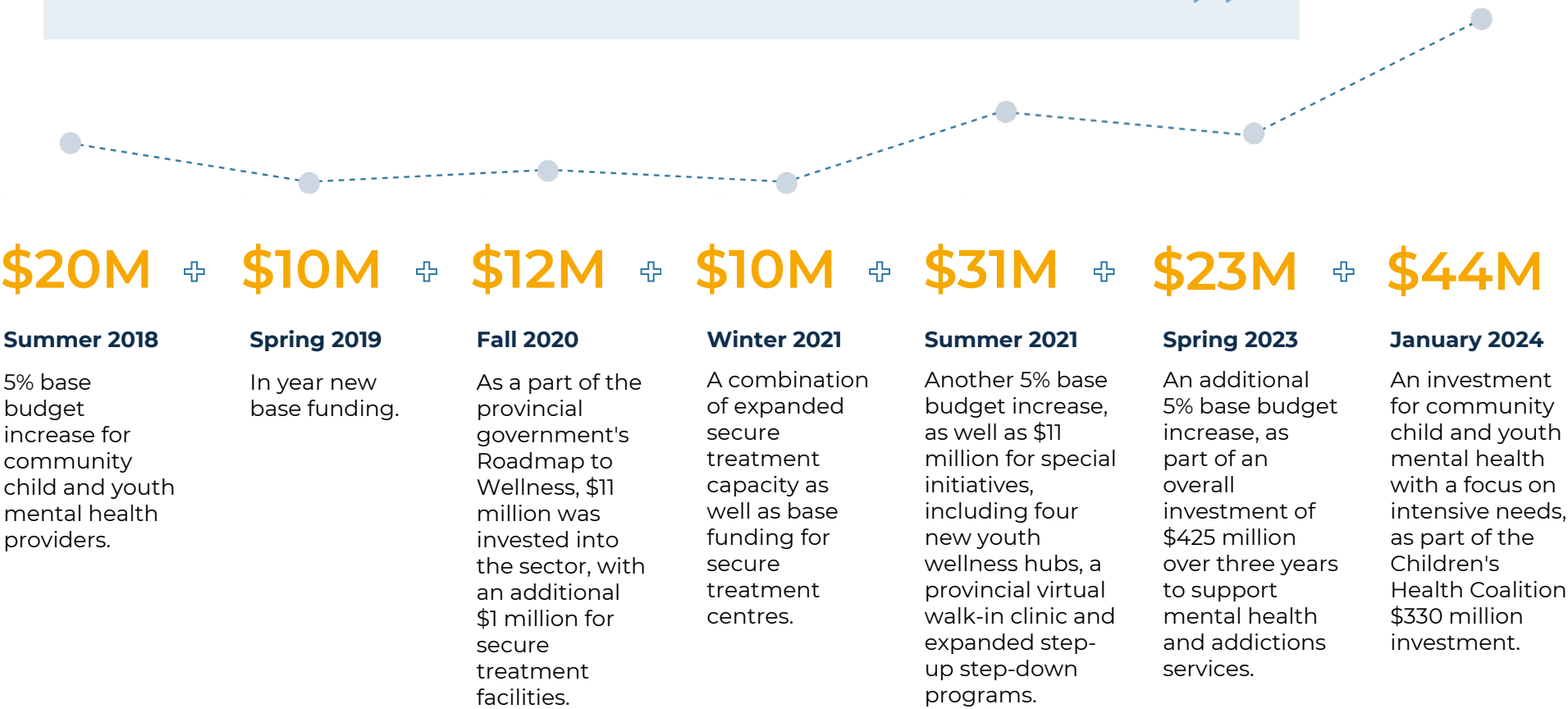
INVESTMENTS IN COMMUNITY CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

“The Ontario government’s investment in community-based child and youth mental health comes at a critical time as we see an increased demand from children and youth with intensive needs, coupled with longstanding gaps in available treatment programs and staff shortages. With the right support and continued investments, we can ensure a future where all infants, children, youth, and families get the mental health care and supports they need to thrive.”

– Tatum Wilson, CEO



= \$150M
Total to Date



NO SPACE FOR HATE – STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH GENDER DIVERSE, TRANS, AND QUEER CHILDREN AND YOUTH

CMHO and our member child and youth mental health centres across the province [raised our voices](#) and stood in solidarity to show support for the human rights and well-being of gender-diverse, trans, and queer children and youth. We know that 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth are at higher risk of mental health issues and suicidality due to the impacts of marginalization, discrimination, and hate, as well as intersecting impacts from racism, poverty, and other factors.

CMHO and its child and youth mental health centres are fully committed to supporting the mental health of 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth, 365 days a year, and will continue to do our part to advocate for an Ontario where all our children and youth can thrive.



SOUNDING THE ALARM ON ONTARIO'S ALCOHOL EXPANSION – ADVOCATING FOR A PROVINCIAL ALCOHOL STRATEGY

CMHO joined a coalition of organizations across public health, research and advocacy, and community mental health and addictions to [call on the province to develop a comprehensive provincial alcohol strategy](#) to promote the health and safety of people in Ontario. For CMHO, it is critical that we highlight the impact of alcohol use on infants, children, youth, families, and communities—not only the direct impact on young people but also the impact on young people from parent and caregiver alcohol use.



THE NEW MENTALITY – RAISING YOUTH VOICES TO IMPACT CHANGE

Supporting Youth Engagement and Leadership in Local Communities

The New Mentality (TNM) Groups are formed in partnership with CMHO member agencies and complete projects in their communities focused on mental health awareness, decreasing stigma, and sharing resources, including information about accessing mental health supports. This year, we supported the groups by developing programs and capacity-building opportunities for youth and adult allies, including skill-building sessions and monthly communities of practice, which were designed to help youth leaders and adult allies connect with their peers across the province, share about their work, and discuss successes and challenges.

Disable the Label: Bringing Youth Mental Health Leadership Development Back in Person!

In July 2023, we marked a significant milestone by hosting our first in-person Disable the Label (DTL) event since 2019. The event took place at the Ecology Retreat Centre in Mono, Ontario, where we welcomed a group of 60 youth leaders and their adult allies from across the province for a 3-day retreat. The event focused on developing skills in youth leadership and engagement and provided a platform for participants to connect with other changemakers across the province. DTL 2023 offered a unique opportunity for participants to reconnect with familiar faces and forge new connections.



Rainbow Connections

Our 2SLGBTQ+ leadership program, Rainbow Connections, wrapped up its second program cycle. 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. In addition to the weekly youth programming space, which included relationship building and queer history sessions, youth from the program also developed two workshops designed to educate staff working in the child and youth mental health sector and parents and families, respectively, about working with and supporting queer youth. After this program cycle, youth participants shared that the program increased their feelings of empowerment and belonging and that they were grateful to be in a space where they could be in solidarity and experience queer joy.



The Gifts of Our People

TNM's The Gifts of Our People, formerly known as the BIPOC Affinity Group, completed its third program cycle this year. The purpose of this program is to build trust and meaningful relationships with Black, Indigenous, and racialized network members, develop participants' leadership skills, and build a collective understanding of the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and racialized youth within TNM and beyond. During monthly meetings, conversations were focused on self-care and embracing our inner hero. TNM strives to create a culture of belonging and a space for Black, Indigenous, and racialized youth to feel brave and connect with others.

The Gifts of Our People completed and launched a [digital zine](#) with the intention of capturing their experiences as racialized youth in our network and the mental health system more broadly. The zine showcases the impact the program has had on Black, Indigenous, and racialized youth within TNM's network and highlights the importance of building brave spaces for racialized youth.



Youth Action Committee Continues to Spotlight Neglected BIPOC Youth Voices Surrounding Mental Health

Our provincial Youth Action Committee (YAC) works to support young people in identifying major issues facing youth in Ontario who are experiencing mental illness and engage our network and the public to find out how we can solve these complex issues. Following province-wide youth consultations, the YAC works together to report on its findings and generate youth-led policy recommendations to stakeholders responsible for change.



This year, the YAC continued to focus on the promotion and dissemination plan for their most recent policy paper, [Adjusting the Spotlight: Re-centering Neglected BIPOC Youth Voices Surrounding Mental Health](#). Committee members met with youth, adult allies, community members, and other partners throughout the province to share their findings and presented a keynote address at the CMHO Conference to over 600 professionals working in the child and youth mental health sector. In addition to promoting their recent work, the committee began the process of identifying a new topic for the next three-year policy cycle. The committee will be launching a new topic and reaching out to youth across the province for their input and perspectives in the coming months.

PARENTS FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH – STRENGTHENING FAMILY CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUPPORT THROUGH PEER-TO-PEER PROGRAMMING



Building Capacity for Family Peer Support at our In-Person Symposium

In November 2023, CMHO hosted our first in-person symposium for PCMH volunteers. We facilitated a brief training and a space for volunteers to connect and plan for their chapter activities and obtain feedback from families about what they need or themes that are standing out in the family experience. Twenty-three of our 30 volunteers at that time attended the symposium, and feedback was positive, leaving volunteers wanting more opportunities to connect and learn how to best support families in their communities.



"I loved having the time to network, share best practices, and ask for the support that I need to better my chapter's practices." – Family Peer Supporter

Expanding Resources to Support Caregivers and Parents

CMHO secured \$250,000 in funding from the Ministry of Education in March 2024 to increase mental health literacy and supports for parents and guardians on student mental health. This funding will be used to expand the evidence-based psycho-educational resources on our [Family Care Centre](#) and build capacity for families navigating systems of care for their child and/or youth with mental health challenges. This will include the development of a Family Partnership Council and an equity strategy for Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH) to ensure the diversity of family voices reflected in this project.

Growing our PCMH Peer Support Chapters

Between April 2023 and March 2024, our group of volunteers grew from 30 to 50 individuals with lived or living expertise. This enhanced PCMH's capacity for existing chapters to offer peer support to families and allowed us to open eight new chapters across the province, including three special topic chapters—FASD Ontario, FASD London, and The Healing Path (for parents and caregivers surviving their child or youth's suicide).

"I have found [PCMH peer support] to be a really good resource. It's the little things that I find really helpful. You know when you're in the thick of it, it's hard to remember things. That's why I keep coming back. You guys get it."

– Family member



Supporting Families with Subject Matter Expert-Led Webinars

Our webinars provided another platform of support to families across Ontario and helped us build cross-sector partnerships to elevate awareness of CMHO and the PCMH peer support program. We invited subject matter experts to present on topics that were identified by families in our chapter networks. Many of the webinars were recorded and can be accessed on our [Family Care Centre](#) so families can watch them at any time. This year, we covered the following topics, which were well-attended by families across the province:

- Grieving is Part of the Journey
- Understanding and Managing Screen Time
- The Truth About Lying
- Caregivers Have Feelings Too
- How to Talk to Your Employer About Your Family's Needs
- Finding Balance Parenting Young Adults with Mental Health Concerns

1000+

FAMILIES
SUPPORTED BY
20 CHAPTERS

146

NEW FAMILIES
CONNECTED
WITH PCMH

1285

HOURS
SUPPORTING
FAMILIES

89

ONE-TO-ONE
PEER SUPPORT
SESSIONS



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 2023–24:

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

CMHO continued to prioritize policy and advocacy focused on the longstanding health human resource (HHR) challenges facing the sector. In August 2023, CMHO released an update to our original workforce report based on advice from our HHR working group of 25 CMHO members. Our report, [The Solutions for Today, Tomorrow, and the Future](#), laid out the current challenges through a series of recommendations that span both sector-driven solutions and those requiring government policy changes and initiatives.

CMHO members continued to report growing needs and demand in 2023–24 while also experiencing job vacancies across agencies. The combination of long waitlists, an increasing need for mental health services, a competitive labour market, and workforce shortages prompted important policy and system considerations for the CYMH service system. Developing a workforce strategy centred on approaches that remove barriers, enable wage parity, improve recruitment and retention, and support and build the workforce for the future is critical to enable a stable, sustainable, and thriving community workforce able to provide accessible, equitable, and high-quality mental health services to Ontario's infants, children, youth, and families.



Addressing the Health Human Resources
Challenges Facing Ontario's Community
Child and Youth Mental Health System
Solutions for Today, Tomorrow, and the Future



Working with our partners across ten community health organizations, CMHO continued to support [urgent calls to action](#) to address significant compensation and HHR challenges across the community health sector, including for community child and youth mental.

PRIORITIZING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SECTOR HEALTH EQUITY STRATEGY

Together with our members, CMHO is committed to addressing health disparities and achieving better mental health outcomes for infants, children, youth, and families across Ontario. Our commitment to advancing equity is reflected in our journey, with a focus on developing a child and youth provincial health equity strategy for the sector. In 2023–24, we continued our work developing the strategy following focus groups, consultations, and strategic planning to identify priorities along with members, sector partners at the Lead Agency Consortium and the Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions, and youth and families.

With improvements made locally and regionally to advance equitable approaches within agencies, our collective work developing a health equity strategy for the child and youth mental health sector has been supported within the scope of strategic planning. With the addition of various engagement sessions in 2024, the development process has been collaborative, informed along the way by research and youth-led policy, and supported through engagement that includes dialogue, lived expertise, and member consultations.

At the same time, our member-led Equity Community of Practice (CoP) has been a crucial learning space to share and expand knowledge on topics related to equity, diversity, and inclusion over the last three years. This year, CMHO hosted ten monthly opportunities in both meeting format and through thought and reflection exercises to foster discussion and resource sharing among participants. Equity CoP co-chairs led a conference session in November 2023, Advancing Equity through a Community of Practice, to share best practices and principles of the work. Moving forward, CMHO is reflecting on the evolution of equity learning spaces for members with other strategies to advance equity in our system.



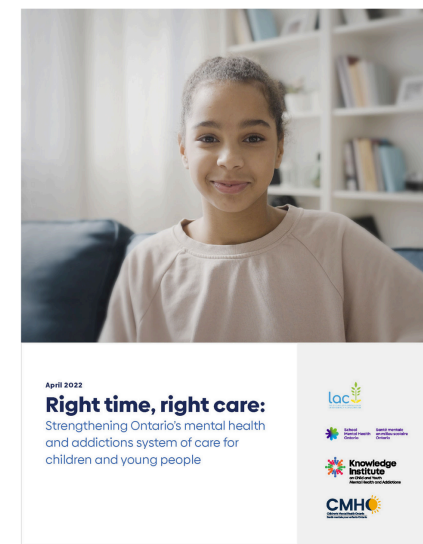
**CYMH = Child and Youth Mental Health*

ADVANCING PROVINCIAL SYSTEMS WORK IN CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

System Collaboration: Advancing Right Time, Right Care Between Schools and Community

Together with the Lead Agency Consortium, the Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions, and School Mental Health Ontario, CMHO developed [Right Time, Right Care: Strengthening Ontario's Mental Health System of Care for Children and Young People](#). Right Time, Right Care (RTRC) was launched as a collaborative resource providing a collective vision for how community-based child and youth mental health organizations and schools in Ontario can collaborate to provide a coordinated, responsive system of care.

In 2023–24, alongside the partners who developed RTRC and Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario, we have been working to move RTRC from vision to reality by supporting implementation planning for communities across Ontario. Prioritizing provincial systems of care work is an important part of improving quality, access, and coordination in the child and youth mental health system. With the development of tools, resources, and coaching supports for both sectors, we are working to ensure that children, young people, and families have access to mental health care for their needs, aligned with capacity in local communities by applying a systems approach as the foundation.



Partnering to Develop an Ontario Intensive Treatment Pathway

When the new investment of \$44.6 million for community-based child and youth mental health was announced, an important door opened to advance provincial system policy work for community-based intensive services for children and youth. As part of this work, CMHO has been working in partnership with the Lead Agency Consortium and the Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions to transform the delivery of care and address long wait times for children and youth across the province requiring intensive treatment through the Ontario Intensive Treatment Pathway. This initiative will better coordinate services and enhance evidence-based, quality, intensive treatment capacity across the province so that all families can get the mental health care and support they need closer to home, and when they need it.

BUILDING INTEGRATED CAPACITY IN THE SECTOR

Provincial Training Initiative

The Provincial Training Initiative (PTI) is a multi-year project delivered in partnership with the Lead Agency Consortium, engaging over 160 core service providers across Ontario. The PTI seeks to increase the number of child and youth mental health clinicians and providers trained to deliver evidence-based treatment services designed for children and youth with complex and significant mental health needs. The PTI offers training in four training modalities: Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Dialectal Behavioral Therapy (DBT), Attachment, Regulation, and Competency (ARC), and Circle of Security Parenting (CoSP). In 2023–24, the PTI project:



Built a sustainable and supported provincial training, education, and professional development model to improve the consistency and efficacy of evidence-based clinical treatment modalities.



Established training networks across the province to assess the readiness of Lead Agencies and core service providers to engage in evidence-based training and determine an adapted training plan.



Developed a provincial Francophone training strategy and ensured the availability of French-language training in three out of four training modalities.



Developed and disseminated resources to support training networks in launching training across the province.



Trained 1355 healthcare professionals across the province in ARC, TF-CBT, CoSP, and related advanced and clinical topics.

Integrated Autism and Mental Health Capacity

The Building Integrated Autism and Mental Health Capacity Training Project supported professionals in Ontario's autism and child and youth mental health sectors to enhance their expertise in treating and supporting autistic children and youth with mental health challenges and their families in 2023–24. This project, funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, was initiated in response to a key recommendation from the [Ontario Autism Program \(OAP\) Panel Report](#), published in 2019.

This report highlighted the importance of building capacity across both sectors through advanced comprehensive training in recognition of the high prevalence of autistic children and youth who have mental health needs living across the province. It was critical to engage both sectors in meaningful ways throughout the implementation of this project.

1444

mental health providers
completed advanced
specialized training

1240

autism providers
completed advanced
specialized training

500

participants each attended 11
topic-specific booster sessions
with options in English and French

189

Francophone professionals
completed our new
Francophone integrated
foundational training

3-4

communities of
practice were
hosted in each
of the six regions





3 MOBILIZING FOR SUSTAINED IMPACT

We continue to promote the expertise and innovation embedded in our membership and work to further our sector's reputation as leaders in the child and youth mental health system.

Critical to our success is the engagement and support from members, and we were thrilled to welcome **Keystone Child, Youth, and Family Services** as a new member in 2023–24!

HERE'S HOW WE MOBILIZED FOR SUSTAINED IMPACT IN 2023–24:

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, including an Ontario Community Health compensation review
- Ontario Health Teams
- Intensive treatment

WE FACILITATED

7

LEADERSHIP
EXCHANGES

WE CONVENED

5

MEMBER
WORKING GROUPS

WE OFFERED

3

MEMBER
WEBINARS

WE CREATED

3

ADVOCACY
TOOLKITS

TOGETHER FOR TOMORROW – 2023 CMHO CONFERENCE

CMHO was thrilled to host our first in-person conference since 2019 under the theme of Together for Tomorrow: Advancing Quality, Equity, and Access in Child and Youth Mental Health. This conference was our largest yet with over 650 leaders in child and youth mental health and continues to be North America's biggest child and youth mental health conference. The energy and excitement were palpable throughout the event, with energizing and thought-provoking keynotes, workshops that shared leading practices and new ways to advance equity in the sector, and many networking opportunities.



Youth leaders from TNM were very much involved in the conference, with the YAC presenting a keynote address focused on the importance of youth voices in informing services and sharing their bold vision for what is needed to create a truly inclusive child and youth mental health sector.

TNM's Affinity Groups—Rainbow Connections and The Gifts of Our People—who work with 2SLGBTQ+ and racialized youth, respectively, also presented. Each group hosted a workshop on youth engagement and how to effectively support 2SLGBTQ+ and racialized youth. The workshops were well attended and among the most highly and positively reviewed workshops of the entire conference.



650+

LEADERS IN
CHILD AND YOUTH
MENTAL HEALTH

36

WORKSHOPS

25

EXHIBITORS
& SPONSORS

5

KEYNOTE
ADDRESSES



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 we look forward to continuing our 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 the right time.