



**ANNUAL REPORT CARD:  
 THE BURDEN OF KIDS  
 MENTAL ILLNESS ON  
 FAMILIES  
 AND THE  
 ECONOMY**

**NEW RESEARCH FINDS THE ONTARIO  
 ECONOMY LOSES**

**\$421 MILLION**  
 A YEAR AS PARENTS MISS WORK TO CARE  
 FOR THEIR CHILD WITH ANXIETY ISSUES

*(Source: Canadian Centre for Health Economics at the University of Toronto Report commissioned by CMHO)*

“The labour market burden on parents with children who suffer from anxiety disorders in one year alone is quite significant.”

*Audrey Laporte, Canadian Centre for Health Economics at the University of Toronto*

**NOT ONLY ARE  
 EMPLOYERS  
 FEELING THE PINCH, SO ARE  
 FAMILIES**

- 80% of parents/caregivers stated that their work life was impacted as a result of their child/youth's mental health concern
- 71% of parents/caregivers stated that their finances were impacted as a result of their child/youth's mental health concern
- 81% of siblings had to take on additional responsibilities in their family as a result of their sibling's mental health issues

*(Source: CMHO Parent Survey 2018, CMHO Sibling Survey 2019)*

**1 IN 4 PARENTS  
 HAVE MISSED WORK TO CARE  
 FOR THEIR CHILD WITH ANXIETY ISSUES**









- 1 in 3 parents in Ontario are seeking mental health services for their child
- Of these, 4 in 10 didn't find the help they needed or are still waiting

*(Source: IPSOS 2017)*



“Michele and I are fortunate... because we both have careers in consulting... Someone on scheduled work hours would have found it extremely difficult to accommodate the family's needs, and it is easy to see how opportunities for promotions and advancements are indefinitely put on the back burner.”

*Lloyd Sparling, Parent Advocate and CPA*

INDICATOR	PERFORMANCE	IMPACT ON FAMILIES	IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY	NEEDED ACTION
<p><b>Right Care</b></p> 	<p>The majority of parents and caregivers surveyed by CMHO (71%) report a lack of availability of programs and services to meet their needs, while 62 per cent cite a lack of coordination between health care providers (62%), followed by lack of a transition plan (55%).</p> <p>For parents and caregivers of youth who are transitioning from the child and youth system to the adult system, 90 per cent have not yet received a plan or never received a plan to transition their youth from the child and youth mental health system to receiving adult services, and 89 per cent of have not found equal or complementary programming to those they assessed in the child and youth system.</p> <p>Child and Youth Mental Health Centres are working to provide high quality care to clients, but require supports to implement various quality improvement strategies and improve capacity to meet the growing demand for child and youth mental health treatment and services.</p>	<p>In a recent survey, parents of children with mental health issues reported that the following aspects of their lives were negatively impacted due to their child's mental health issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finances (73%)</li> <li>• Work life (80%)</li> <li>• Family relationships (84%)</li> <li>• Social relationships (78%)</li> <li>• Physical and mental health (88%)</li> </ul> <p>And it's not just parents and caregivers who feel the strain. A recent survey of siblings of children and youth with mental health issues found the following aspects of their lives were negatively impacted due to their sibling's mental health issues:</p>	<p>New research from CMHO estimates the cost of parents missing work to care for their child with anxiety in Ontario is approximately \$420 million a year, impacting one in four parents.</p> 	<p>CMHO is calling on the government to better support families across Ontario, with an additional investment of \$150 million a year to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ensure that no child or youth waits more than 30 days for mental health and addictions treatment</li> <li>✓ Expand specialized youth mental health and addictions centres to ensure that children and youth get the type of treatment they need which may include emergency or 24 hour crisis care outside of hospitals</li> </ul>
<p><b>Right Time</b></p> 	<p>Almost all parents (90 per cent) in a recent survey about the child and youth mental health system report wait times for starting or transitioning between services as the biggest gap in care. And it appears the issue of wait times is getting worse – last year a CMHO commissioned IPSOS survey found 4 in 10 parents didn't find the help they need or are still waiting for help for their child with anxiety issues – with wait times being the primary reason in over 65% of cases.</p> <p>The average wait time for community-based counselling and therapy services is over 78 days. In some parts of the province, the wait can be as high as 1.5 years!</p>	<p>Relationships with their parents/caregivers (84%)</p> <p>Challenges completing school work (50%)</p> <p>Challenges with their own mental health (60%)</p> <p>Missed school (33%)</p>	<p>We know from previous research that the cost to the Canadian economy of mental illness is estimated at \$50 billion annually, with \$20 billion of that stemming directly from workplace losses.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Hire and retain the highest skilled staff caring for our most vulnerable children including 1400 new full-time professionals</li> <li>✓ Increase the eligibility age up to 25 for the child and youth mental health system, and expand capacity to improved care between child, youth and adult services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Right Place</b></p> 	<p>Although wait times remains the primary challenge for families trying to access mental health treatment, the location and proximity of programs to clients has been identified by parents as a major barrier. 42% of parents surveyed by CMHO identified the location of programs (i.e. program located outside of their community) as significant gap in care.</p> <p>More of our kids and young people are turning to hospitals because wait times for treatment in their communities are too long, they don't know where else to go or because services are not available locally. The number of children and youth going to the emergency department has increased 72% over the last 11 years, and the number of young people being hospitalized has increased by 79%.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Support parents and siblings in their communities and in the workplace with family counselling, respite and other supports</li> <li>✓ Develop quality standards to deliver the best mental health and addictions services</li> </ul> 

“ I think that finding a way to relieve the stress and a lot of the work load from the parents who are struggling with a child who has a mental illness is a good way to support the child(ren) who does not have a mental illness. I found home life a very stressful and negative environment because of all the fighting and I felt like the only place I was safe was at school. And my parents drove me to my extra-curricular activities, but the conversation in the car was all about my sibling and I felt like as the oldest I had to take on a lot of their stresses too. So because I was supporting them, I never felt like I had someone supporting me.”

*Youth, Anonymous, CMHO Sibling Survey*

“ For the past two years I became part time so that I could be home to care for him when he needed to leave school early (counselling, doctor appointments, etc), and as a result had to give up my chaplain position at the high school I teach at. I am back full time this year, but my wife has in turn now gone to half-time so that she can be available for him.”

*Jeff Warner, parent advocate, Guelph*

THIS IS IN ADDITION TO THE  
**RISING COSTS**  
OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH  
CRISIS TO OUR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM.

- 72,000 more emergency department visits and 14,000 more hospitalizations a year
- \$220,000,000 annually in additional hospital costs

*(Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2006 to 2016/2017)*



**72%** rise in ED visits and a **79%** spike in hospitalizations for children and youth seeking help for mental health and substance use problems

“ At a time when Ontario businesses face a number of challenges, mental health does not have to be one of them. Providing better support to the caregivers of children and youth with mental illness and employers is fundamental to not only creating healthy workspaces but building a stronger Ontario for all. ”

*Rocco Rossi, President and CEO, Ontario Chamber of Commerce*

## OUR SOLUTIONS

TO HELP KIDS, FAMILIES AND THE ECONOMY

The costs of inaction for kids, families, our healthcare system and our economy are too high. With the government's financial support, together we can end the wait for better child and youth mental health care. We can fix this by increasing funding to community mental health programs by \$150 million per year to ensure that no child or young person waits longer than 30 days for mental health treatment. We urge the government to make crucial investments to:

- 1 Ensure access to psychotherapy within 30 days
- 2 Make intensive treatment available to children, youth, and families facing the most significant mental health issues
- 3 Scale 24/7 crisis support services to ensure children, youth, and families don't have to go to the emergency department

**Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO)** works to identify and develop solutions to important policy issues affecting the child and youth mental health sector. We represent close to 100 accredited children's mental health agencies that provide treatment and support to infants, children, youth and families. This includes targeted prevention, early intervention, short- and long-term counselling and therapy, and intensive services for those with complex and/or persistent mental health issues.

