

THE ONTARIO MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS ALLIANCE

ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

The Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Alliance is a coalition of organizations from across the province and across the continuum of care – from community to hospital services and including consumer and family organizations. Our goal is to ensure that mental health and addictions are a provincial government priority.

Why prioritize mental health and addictions?

Mental health and addiction problems impact every Ontarian and result in significant economic costs to society. Despite this, many Ontarians do not receive the services and supports they need.

- In any given year, one in five people in Ontario experiences a mental health or addiction problem.ⁱ
- The Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions noted that many Ontarians face long waiting lists, long lapses between getting an assessment and receiving support, and a lack of age-appropriate services close to home.ⁱⁱ
- The economic cost of mental health and addiction issues in Ontario is estimated at \$39 billion annually.ⁱⁱⁱ

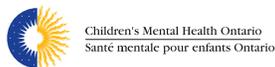
The Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Alliance urges all political parties to adopt a plan of action for addictions and mental health:

- 1. Make a full range of mental health and addiction services and supports accessible to every person in Ontario, when and where needed.**

ISSUE: Access to mental health and addiction services varies significantly across Ontario.

↳ **ACTION REQUIRED:**

- A full range of mental health and addiction services and supports is made accessible to every person in Ontario, when and where needed.
- Needs are identified and addressed early, with a particular focus on children, youth and seniors.
- Wait times for services and supports are tracked, reported and reduced across the province with an eye to eliminating them.
- Health equity is made a priority, and the mental health and addictions system is accessible and responsive to all of Ontario's diverse populations.



2. Ensure that people with mental health and/or addiction issues have access to safe and affordable housing, with supports as needed.

ISSUE: Safe, affordable housing is critical to recovery and positive mental health for all, but the wait to access supportive housing is far too long.

↳ **ACTION REQUIRED:**

- Access to housing with supports is expanded across Ontario.
- The needs of people with mental health and/or addiction issues are made central in the development and implementation of all municipal, provincial and federal housing initiatives.

3. Engage stakeholders in meaningful collaboration to provide guidance on the implementation of Ontario’s mental health and addiction initiatives.

ISSUE: The mental health and addictions system involves multiple ministries and sectors, but co-ordination and leadership are lacking.

↳ **ACTION REQUIRED:**

- Consumers, providers, researchers, LHINs and ministries work together to maximize the impact and quality of all investments in mental health and addictions.
- Progress on the implementation of Ontario’s initiatives in this area is monitored and publicly reported.

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ⁱ D. Offord et al. (1996). “One-Year Prevalence of Psychiatric Disorder in Ontarians 15 to 64 Years of Age.” *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 41, 559–564.

ⁱⁱ Ontario Legislative Assembly, Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. (2010). *Final Report: Navigating the Journey to Wellness: The Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Ontarians*.

ⁱⁱⁱ S. Ratnasingham et al. (2012). *Opening Eyes, Opening Minds: The Ontario Burden of Mental Illness and Addictions*. An ICES/PHO Report.