



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Ontario



NEWS RELEASE

CMHA encourages candidates to keep mental health and addictions care in mind

(Toronto, Monday, May 2, 2022) – As candidates and volunteers hit the campaign trail in Ontario this week, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario calls on all political parties to address the urgent need for a substantial, immediate and ongoing *base* funding increase for the community mental health and addictions sector.

CMHA branches, alongside other dedicated service providers in the community mental health and addictions sector, have been historically underfunded.

Most of the funding the community sector receives is program-focused and does nothing to help with operational costs that increase annually. Base funding allows community service providers the flexibility to cover rising operational costs such as inflation, salaries and other overhead.

“As we focus on empathy for Mental Health Week this week, we’re conscious of the fact that Ontarians are weary and struggling,” said Camille Quenneville, CEO, CMHA Ontario. “Polling we’ve conducted throughout the pandemic indicates that nearly 80 per cent of Ontarians believe we will be in a serious mental health crisis when the pandemic is over. The need to increase base funding to support more Ontarians is clear.”

Without a substantial base funding increase, wait times will only grow longer and services will be less available. CMHA branches will continue to lose talented front-line staff to high rates of stress and burnout and better paying jobs elsewhere in the health sector.

Each CMHA branch needs at least an eight per cent increase in base funding. A base budget increase will help CMHAs and other community-based providers address operating costs that increase annually, deliver more services, reduce wait times while tackling high rates of stress and burnout amongst frontline staff.

“Most CMHA branches have not seen a base funding increase in the past 5-10 years, straining their ability to meet the increasing demand for their programs and services,” said Quenneville. “We will continue to advocate for additional funding to support our clients, those in need of service and the people providing care.”

CMHA Ontario urges the public to vote for the party that will invest significantly in the community mental health and addictions system.

For more information about the “*I choose*” campaign, visit www.ichoosemha.ca or follow #ichoosemha on social media.

For a broader look at the challenges impacting mental health and addictions services in Ontario, visit www.everythingisnotok.ca

Fast Facts:

- During the pandemic, 1 in 4 Ontarians accessed mental health support, up from about 1 in 10 two years ago.
- Since 2016 the government has provided \$132 billion for the acute care sector versus \$7 billion for community mental health and addictions.
- 66 per cent of resignations over the last two years have been salary-based.
- Canada provides considerably less funding for mental health than other leading jurisdictions, with just over seven cents out of every public health care dollar going to mental health.

About Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario is a not-for-profit, charitable organization funded by the provincial government. We work to improve the lives of all Ontarians through leadership, collaboration and continual pursuit of excellence in community-based mental health and addictions services. Our vision is a society that embraces and invests in the mental health of all people. We are a trusted advisor to government, contributing to health systems development through policy formulation and recommendations that promote positive mental health.

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