

IN FOCUS

MOVING FORWARD
WITH 20/20 VISION



Ontario Centre of Excellence
for Child & Youth Mental Health

Centre d'excellence de l'Ontario en santé
mentale des enfants et des adolescents



Joanne became CHEO's new Vice-President of Mental Health and Addictions in February 2020. The role — the first of its kind in Canadian pediatric hospitals — includes overseeing all of CHEO's clinical mental health programs and the Centre, as a provincial program at CHEO. Joanne was previously a manager of mental health services at CHEO until 2011, when she became executive director at the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa (a position she maintains alongside her new role at CHEO).

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MESSAGE FROM CHEO'S VICE-PRESIDENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

COVID-19 has presented some overwhelming challenges as well as opportunities for the child and youth mental health sector. I would like to acknowledge the Centre's swift response on all levels. The shift to work from home while continuing to provide support to the sector has been exceptional. Without a doubt, there will continue to be opportunities for the Centre to provide leadership throughout the transition to a "new normal".

Over the past several years, I've had many occasions to work in partnership with the Centre, through my role at the Youth Services Bureau. I'm pleased we'll be working more closely in the months and years to come to ensure the best life, not just for the young people in our region, but for children, youth and families across the province.

The greatest increase in demand for CHEO's services over the past decade has come from young people in mental health crisis. This challenge isn't unique to the Ottawa area and those we serve — in Ontario, the number of young people making emergency department visits for mental health and substance-use issues increased a staggering 83 percent from 2006 to 2018. What's more is these young people tend to make more return visits and have longer stays than children and youth with other conditions.

Obviously, this situation isn't ideal for anyone involved. It's an inefficient use of hospital resources, it reduces the capacity of physicians and nurses to respond to high-risk needs and, critically, it very rarely results in children and youth getting the right kind of care for their mental health needs.

Access to community-based mental health services and wait times certainly have an important role to play in this dynamic. To that end, the Centre is a key collaborator in addressing these issues at the provincial level, notably through its leadership of the Child and Youth Mental Health Lead Agency Consortium's Provincial Priorities Report Standing Committee working group to improve access.

The Centre is also working to address another major contributing factor: the gap between primary care and community-based mental health services. The fact is, many physicians feel ill-equipped to detect or treat mental health concerns, and most lack adequate information about the services available in their community. With its focus on pathways, the Centre is supporting care providers from different settings — and sometimes, different sectors — to work together to establish shared, systematic referral processes for child and youth mental health services.

Of course, these are just a couple examples of the important work the Centre undertakes every day. I appreciate the opportunity I'll have to contribute as the Centre's executive lead at CHEO and as a member of the Centre's strategic advisory council. I look forward to all we'll accomplish together!

Joanne Lowe



LEADERS' MESSAGE

Moving forward with 20/20 vision

After a year of significant transition in our sector, we spent 2019 recalibrating. It didn't take long, though, to refine our strategic directions and crystallize our focus. By the time January rolled around, we had already taken several bold steps forward with a clear, sharp line of sight. You might say we started the new year with both a new look and 20/20 vision.

Aware and informed

Peripheral awareness is a skill we have honed over the years at the Centre by keeping an eye on the evidence, and our ears open to hearing what's happening among our partners and across sectors. We look carefully at needs and opportunities and help the sector to make evidence-informed decisions to ensure the best possible outcomes for Ontario's children, youth and families.

Nimble and responsive

If there's one thing we have learned this year, it's the importance of adaptability. The arrival of COVID-19 meant that we had to adjust timelines and milestones for several projects. However, we're proud of how quickly we were able to assemble [resources](#) to respond to the sector's knowledge needs and collaborate with partners to build capacity around virtual care. The circumstances surrounding the pandemic underscore how vitally important it is to advance e-mental health solutions. So, it is quite convenient that we already had our eyes (and minds) on it!

Coordinated and integrated

Our achievements are powered by teamwork, much like good vision requires the eyes to work in tandem. Whether internally with our staff or with our partners and across system initiatives, we work in collaboration to make sure we avoid blind spots and don't duplicate efforts. Our [primary care pathways](#) project is just one example, demonstrating how children, youth and families benefit when primary care practitioners and community-based mental health service providers work together to form one coordinated continuum of care.

Strategic and forward-thinking

We intentionally seek out and integrate diverse perspectives along with the latest data to inform our decision-making — both while we're planning projects and initiatives, and while we're implementing them. This helps us to see a challenge or opportunity clearly and understand the best time and way to respond. This kind of thinking led us to begin to champion the [early years](#) mental health project (from birth to age 6 in 2019) and it's why in coming months, we'll be looking at filling knowledge gaps in middle years mental health (ages 7 to 11).

It's also this way of thinking and acting that allows us to say with confidence that years from now, when we look back on this strange time, we won't just see the challenges and uncertainty that surrounded us. Hindsight will reveal that at the Centre, our team kept moving forward through unprecedented circumstances with strong vision and a sharp focus.

Purnima Sundar,

Acting Executive Director

Cathy Curry,

Chair, Strategic Advisory Council



IN FOCUS



VISION

The best mental health and well-being for every child, youth and family.

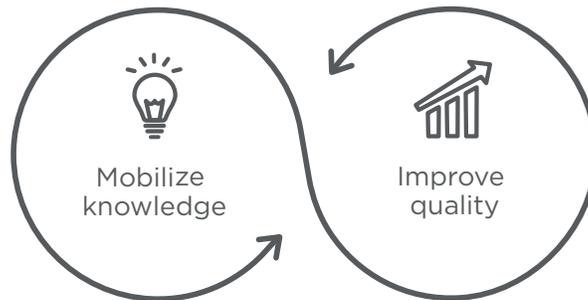


MISSION

We drive high-quality child and youth mental health service delivery for Ontario's children, youth and families by mobilizing knowledge and setting the bar for excellence.

OUR WORK CURRENTLY FOCUSES ON

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2019-21



AGE RANGES



Early years
Birth to ~6 years



Middle years
~7-11 years



Teen years
~12-18 years



Transition age
~19-25 years

FOCUS AREAS



Primary care/
care pathways



Youth and family
engagement



Digital/
e-mental health



System
initiatives

▶ developing, implementing and strengthening **care pathways**

▶ ensuring meaningful and consistent **youth engagement and family engagement** across the system

▶ exploring the power of technology and **e-mental health** solutions to support child and youth mental health

▶ contributing to a strong provincial system of child and youth mental health service delivery through **system initiatives**

CARE PATHWAYS

Connecting primary care and community-based mental health services

Research shows that most families turn first to their family doctors when looking for mental health help for their children and youth. However, physicians tell us that they often struggle to direct families to the care they need because of the disconnect between primary care and community-based mental health services. In 2017, we set out to bridge this gap, publishing [Paving the path to connected care](#), and the following year we began to implement several of the policy paper's eight recommendations.

The [primary care pathways](#) project works to strengthen relationships between providers in different care settings and help them to establish a common, community-tailored care pathway complete with a standardized assessment tool and feedback loops. Last year, we tripled the number of demonstration sites and put pathways to the test in six communities.

As of March 2020, there were four fully operational sites working on collecting data. Another was in the process of launching but has been delayed by competing priorities related to the pandemic response. The sixth community is still in the planning phase. While evaluation won't be completed until all sites complete at least six months of implementation, initial data reveals that:

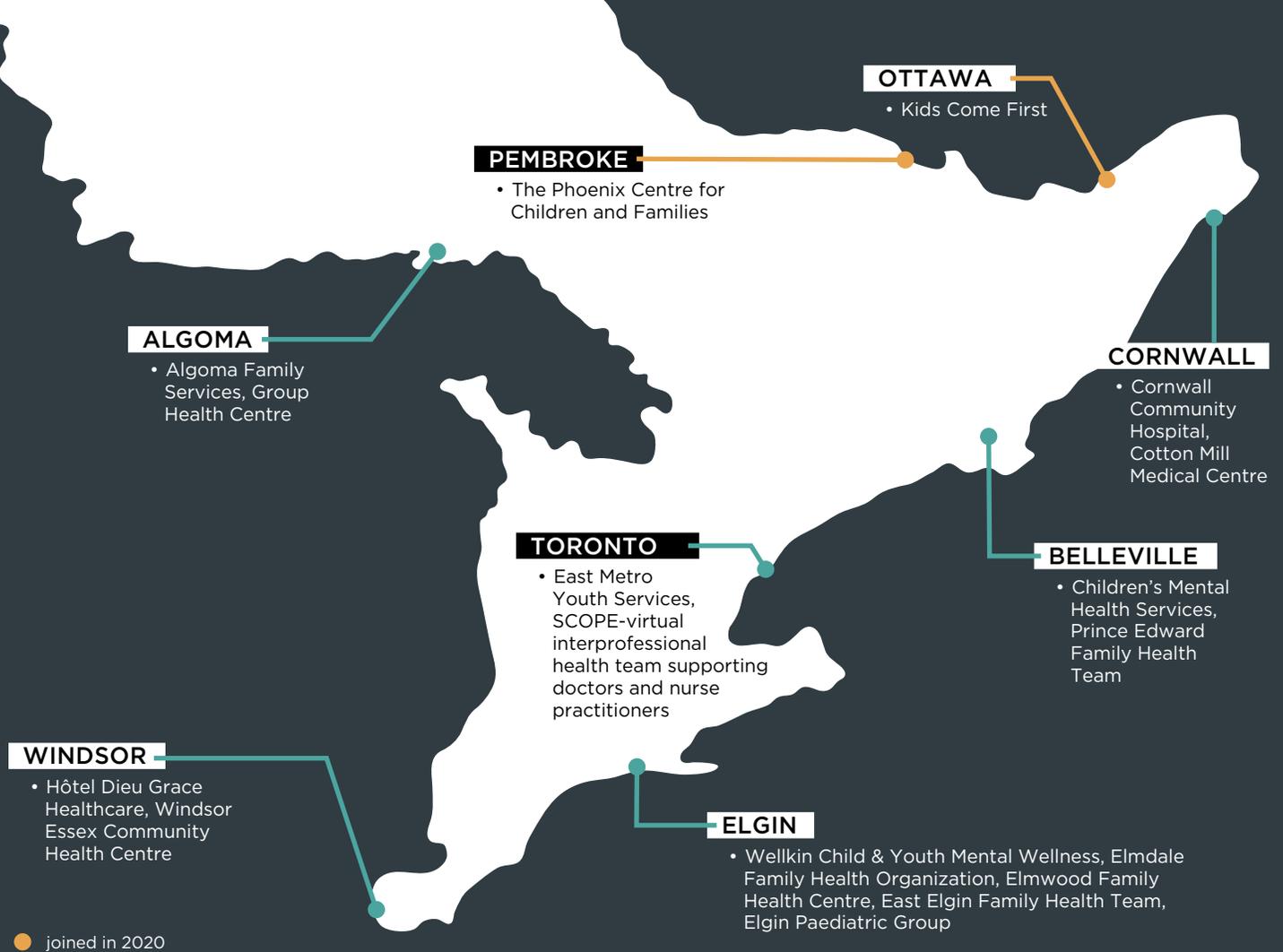
- Anxiety and depression are the leading challenges of those seeking help from their physicians, but most arrive with more than one mental health concern.
- An almost equal number of male and female youth seek help from their physicians.



15-20%

OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WHO VISIT THEIR FAMILY DOCTORS FOR MENTAL HEALTH HELP ARE IDENTIFIED AS “NEEDING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION” (BASED ON A SCORE OF 8 OR MORE ON THE [HEADS-ED](#) SCREENING TOOL)





- Young adolescents seek help most often, relative to other age groups.
- On average, children, youth and families were contacted by a community-based mental health agency within two weeks of their doctor's referral (and their doctor received an update on the referral).
- Most children, youth and families believe they were referred to the right mental health service for their needs and were satisfied with the ease of accessing services.

Additionally, several primary care providers have said they are now more aware of community-based mental health services in their communities, and when and how to refer young people to them.

What's next

In the coming year we will continue to collect data, address barriers to implementation and expand to include two additional sites in Pembroke and Ottawa. These sites will be unique

in that they will go beyond what we're doing in the other settings — creating a common pathway between primary care providers, community-based child and youth mental health services and hospital emergency departments.

“The primary care pathways project speaks to a request we've seen coming from physicians for years, so I was really on board from the beginning. We started as a pilot site in September with six physicians in Elgin county and may consider expanding post-pandemic. We've worked through some bumps but for the most part it's been smooth and the feedback from families has been largely positive.”

— **Deb Donovan**, Data Quality and Administrative Support

Wellkin Child & Youth Mental Wellness





Championing pathways for mental health in early childhood

In June 2019 we released [Beyond building blocks: Investing in the lifelong mental health of Ontario's three- to six-year-olds](#), a policy paper we co-developed with Infant Mental Health Promotion (IMHP) and School Mental Health Ontario (SMH-ON). This paper reflected our deepening focus on the mental and social-emotional development of our youngest Ontarians. It also provided several recommendations to guide policy-making and our own work around [early childhood mental health](#).



2,399

DOWNLOADS OF
THE BEYOND BUILDING
BLOCKS POLICY PAPER

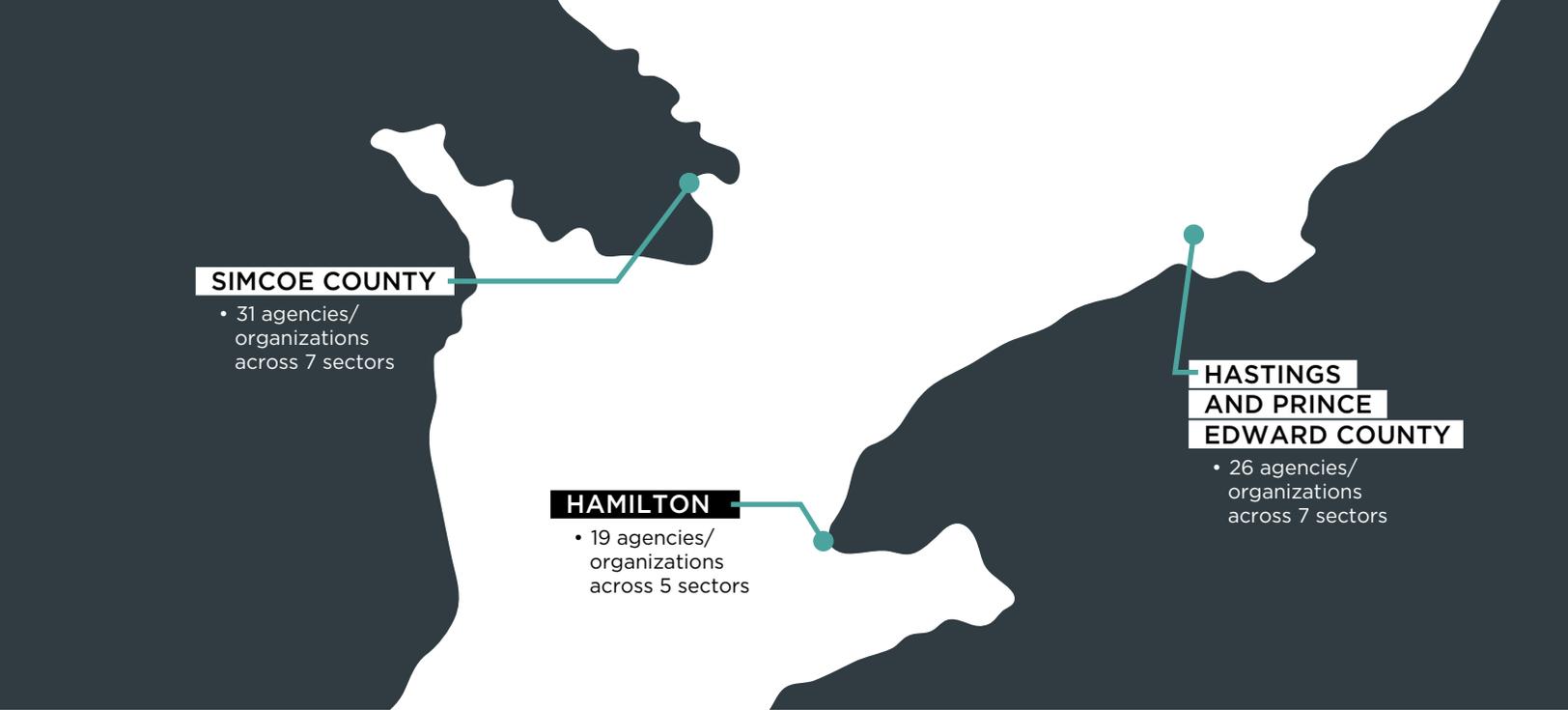
In partnership with IMHP, over the past year we have implemented two of the recommendations:

- Ensure the availability of pre-service training and ongoing learning to support the social-emotional development of three- to six-year-olds.
- Strengthen partnerships to create efficient service pathways for mental health services in the early years.

We began by working with IMHP to identify three communities that had early years mental health as a priority, and that were ready to move the project forward. Our three pilot sites — Hamilton, Simcoe County and Hastings and Prince Edward County — kicked off work in September 2019. Through our community events, we have brought together more than 150 people across eight sectors (including education, early learning and care and public health) to:

- develop local inventories of all community-based services that exist for children under the age of six.





SIMCOE COUNTY

- 31 agencies/ organizations across 7 sectors

HAMILTON

- 19 agencies/ organizations across 5 sectors

HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

- 26 agencies/ organizations across 7 sectors

- create process maps showing what it looks like for families to navigate those services in each community.
- understand how community partners view the “ideal state” with respect to mental health services in the early years.

What’s next?

We’re now reviewing the data collected and working on a plan with our quality improvement team to implement processes that can help communities reach the ideal states they each identified, with clear and solid pathways to care for children under the age of six. We’re also providing local service providers with training on the basics of infant mental health and a common screening tool appropriate for this age group.



The exceptional energy, organization and facilitation skills of the Centre and IMHP created an environment conducive to honest reflection and exploration among participants about sector and discipline-specific early mental health processes and competencies. The facilitators led with probing questions that sparked intense appraisal and debate. This work has galvanized and energized our community – we are all anticipating the next phase of this interactive process in the creation of seamless and time sensitive pathways for early mental health in Simcoe County!”

— **Mary Jean Watson**, Co-chair, Early mental health committee of Simcoe County

Program Manger, Healthy Babies Healthy Children, Community and Family Health Department





Leading the quest for quality improvement

For many years, we worked to build and strengthen a culture of quality improvement (QI) in Ontario's child and youth mental health sector through on-demand consultation and capacity building. Last year, we shifted gears — while still focusing on helping improve service quality for children, youth and families, we partnered with Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO) to develop Quest, a continuous QI cohort program with an approach rooted in Lean Six Sigma methodology.

We began providing QI coaching with agencies in Toronto and London in early 2019. Then, in November, we selected 10 teams of Ministry of Health-funded child and youth mental health care providers from around the province to be part of Quest's first cohort! Groups were selected based on project relevance, feasibility and potential for system-level impact, as well as plans to engage families and youth. These teams are now receiving coaching through an improvement project focused on strengthening care pathways.

In January 2020 we officially launched Quest, giving the teams an opportunity to introduce their projects, hear from Health Quality Ontario (HQP) Vice-President Anna Greenberg and participate in Lean Six Sigma yellow belt training. Originally, we had planned to provide 12 months of project coaching followed by four months of tailored support to focus on sustainability, spread and scale, knowledge mobilization and organizational quality planning, but will adjust our timelines due to the impacts of the pandemic response. Our QI team is quickly pivoting to provide additional support from a distance, coaching teams to keep a QI lens during this time of global crisis and regaining momentum once life returns to "normal".

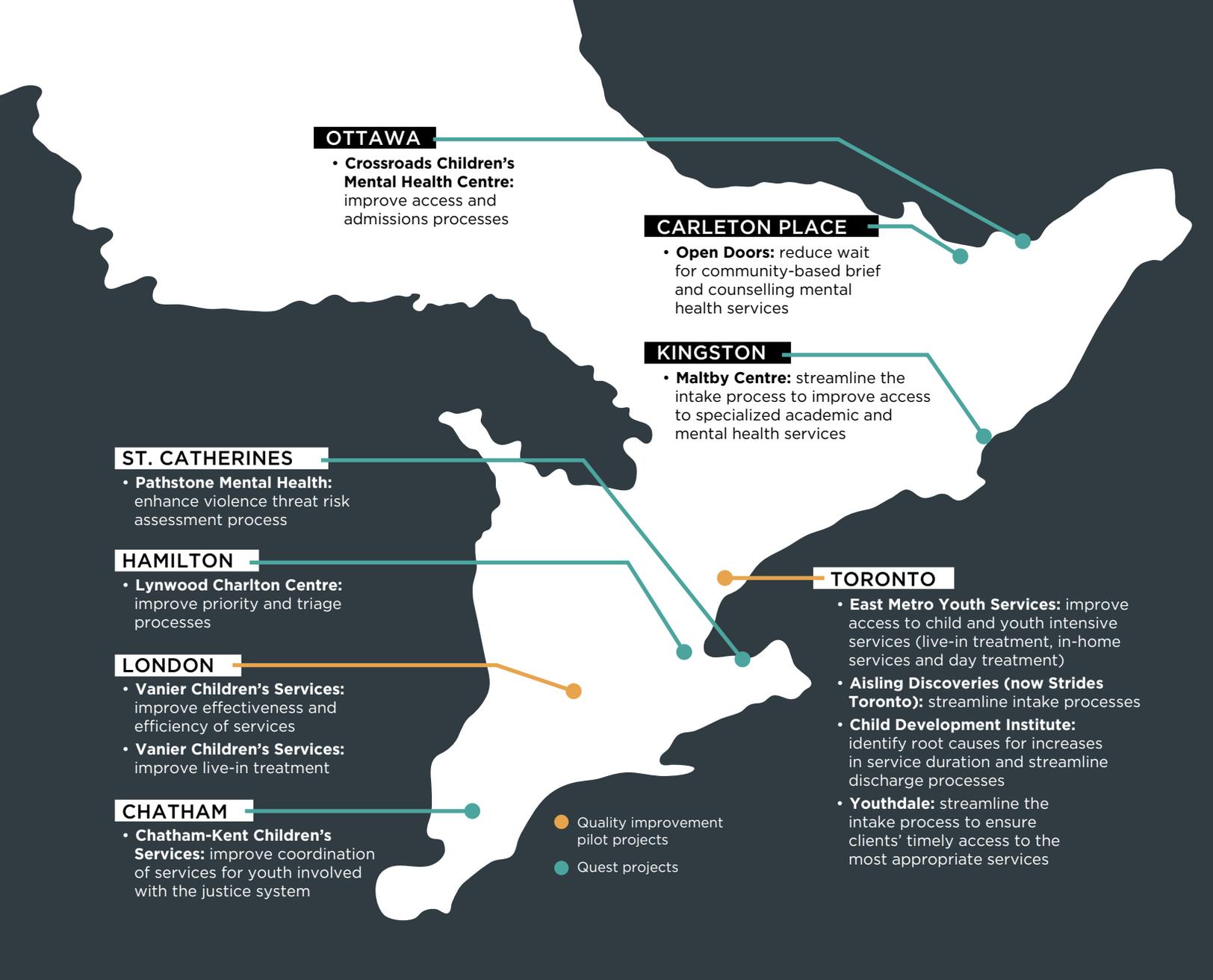
Last fall we also hosted two webinars with Excellence Through Quality Improvement Projects (EQIP). The first explored the current state of

“ We're especially grateful that the Centre developed Quest. It's encouraging to see the energy and commitment we have in our organization toward QI. Being involved in Quest has brought focus to this area of our work. We have had three people participate in yellow belt training so that's a tremendous resource, giving us knowledge, lean processes and tools we can bring, share with colleagues and apply in our organization's other projects.”

— **Kevin Clouthier**, Executive Director

Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth





QI in community mental health and addiction services and QI frameworks. The second focused on how trailblazers use data and QI tools to improve access, timeliness and quality of services.

What's next?

In June 2020 we hosted our third QI webinar with EQIP and have more in the works. We anticipate making the call for proposals for a second Quest cohort in the fall.



58

**PARTICIPANTS
TRAINED AND
CERTIFIED IN
LEAN SIX SIGMA
YELLOW BELT**



YOUTH AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Setting the standard for quality engagement and implementing it

When the Child and Youth Mental Health Lead Agency Consortium identified youth and family engagement as sector priorities, we were asked to lead the co-development of quality standards with provincial partners (including Parents for Children’s Mental Health and the New Mentality), researchers, young people and families.

In the fall of 2019, we were thrilled to share the draft [provincial quality standard for youth engagement](#) and [provincial quality standard for family engagement](#). These standards outline what consistent, measurable, high-quality engagement looks like, including at the system level.

Right away, there was a lot of interest from within our sector and beyond. We began piloting our coaching program in five communities to determine what resources would be most helpful to support the implementation of the quality standards. Achieving these standards across Ontario means more young people and families will be meaningfully engaged in organizational and system planning, informing services and leading to better care experiences and mental health outcomes.

We also appreciated many opportunities to present the quality standards — the first of their kind — at various conferences and events, including:

- Addictions and Mental Health Ontario annual conference, Toronto
- Canadian Mental Health Association national conference, Toronto

2,256

COMBINED
DOWNLOADS
OF THE YOUTH
AND FAMILY
ENGAGEMENT
QUALITY
STANDARDS

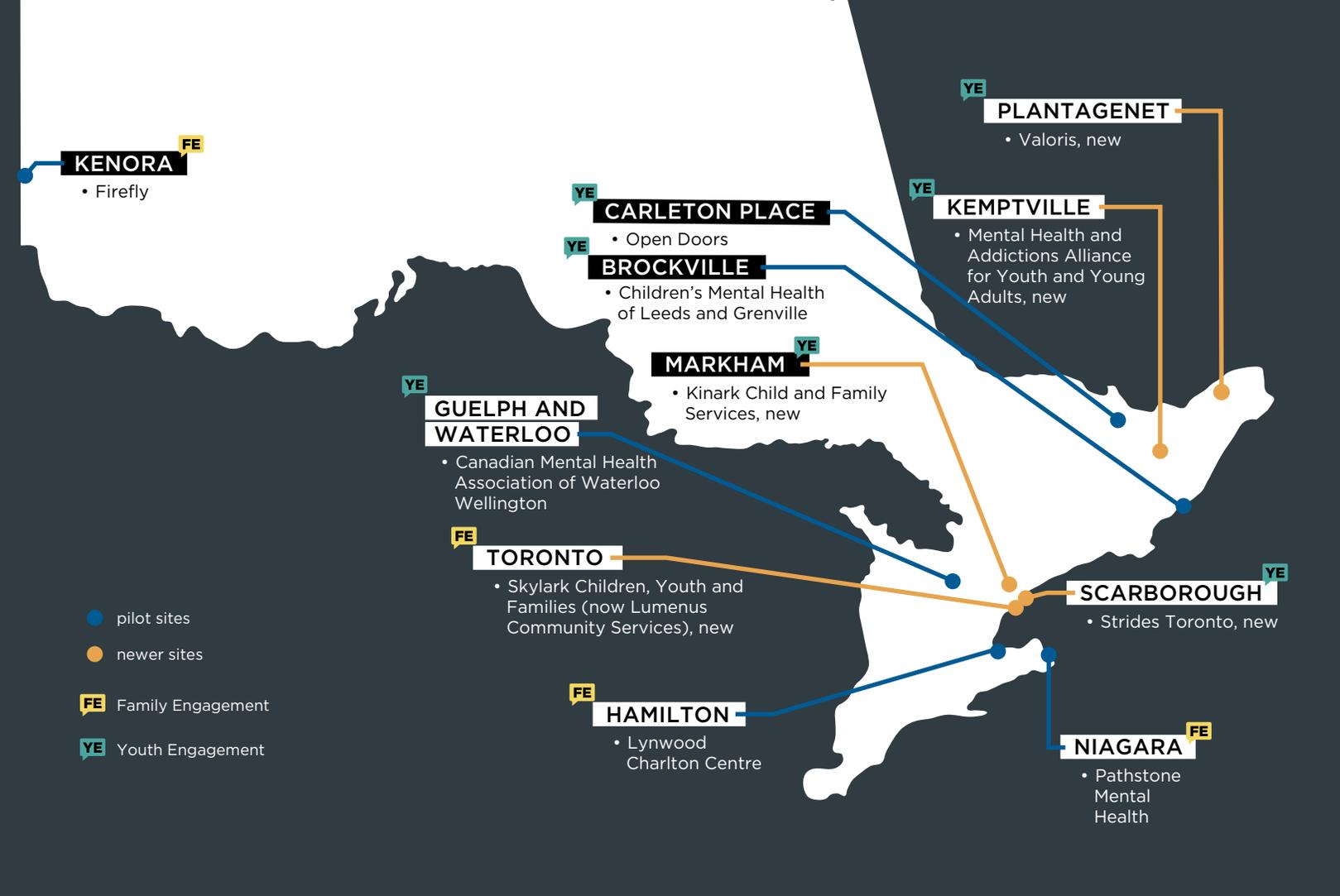
TO DATE,
192 PEOPLE
IN **5** ORGANIZATIONS
OR COMMUNITIES
HAVE COMPLETED
OUR MEASUREMENT
SURVEYS TO HELP
GAUGE THEIR
CURRENT STATES
OF ENGAGEMENT.

- International Association for Youth Mental Health Conference, Australia
- Children’s Healthcare Canada annual conference, Ottawa

What’s next?

By early 2020, we had several agencies interested in accessing our coaching support and we’ve since opened our coaching program broadly to support planning and implementation in more





organizations and communities. From providing tools to measure their current engagement efforts to action planning for where they want to be, we're ready to help. This summer we'll publish the final quality standards, and finish developing resources to support young people and families engaging with organizations that are implementing the quality standards.

While developed in a mental health context, these quality standards consist of principles-based quality statements that have broader relevance. They can be applied across sectors and in different settings, to the benefit of many more children, youth and families.



Before, we were doing some engagement, but nothing substantial. Being part of this project has given us a roadmap and started to pave the path for us to take the quality of our services to a whole other level by getting more families involved in service planning. We've had a family working with us on this and they're really excited to see us go on this journey. I'm excited about what it's going to mean for family engagement at Firefly."

— **Ashley Hoffmeister**, Director of Systems and Performance Management
Firefly



Mobilizing our youth advisory council

Officially launched in early 2019, our [youth advisory council](#) hit the ground running, adding their voices and contributing their expertise to several Centre projects and knowledge-sharing events.

A diverse group from across the province, the youth advisory council reflects our commitment to meaningful youth engagement. We rely on their perspectives and guidance to ensure that our policies, activities and initiatives respond to the needs of young people. That's why members inform key decisions on strategy and resources and work with internal teams on Centre projects, including our youth and family engagement quality standards. Members of our youth advisory council are part of our:

- strategic advisory council
- youth and family engagement quality standards advisory committee
- new e-mental health advisory group
- primary care pathways team
- funding partnership with Mental Health Research Canada

Youth advisory council members were also involved in the development of our new performance measurement framework. Members have occasionally been called upon to attend and present on behalf of the Centre at conferences and other events, notably:

- International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (youth match) in Washington, D.C., September 2019
- Children's Healthcare Canada annual conference in Ottawa, December 2019

“ I've been working with the Centre for almost 10 years now and I've seen a lot of growth in their youth engagement practices. The establishment of this council solidifies how the Centre appreciates youth experience and youth voice. I feel like I'm being heard and validated as a professional with an opinion and that I have space to be a part of creating and sustaining elements of their work. I'm personally getting a lot out of it, too, to take into my professional life.”

— **Amanda McGraw**, Freelance youth engagement facilitator
Youth advisory council member

Our youth advisors — two young people who are full-time Centre staff members — were also busy this year. In addition to taking on leadership roles with our youth advisory council and supporting work for various Centre project teams, our youth advisors co-hosted forums and events and participated in conferences in Ontario and abroad. Notably, this included the International Association for Youth Mental Health Conference in Australia.



Building up our internal family engagement team

Family engagement has been a critical part of our work for many years. Over the last 10 years, we have partnered with Parents for Children’s Mental Health (PCMH) to guide family engagement efforts in communities, develop resources and add depth to the Centre’s bench of service offerings. Together, we released a [family engagement resource guide](#) in April 2019.

We continue to cultivate and maintain valued partnerships with families across our sector, while also enhancing our internal engagement team with the creation of a new role for a family engagement specialist. Importantly, this role helps us ensure we are “walking the talk” when it comes to our own engagement efforts. This person will:

- help more communities and organizations [implement the quality standard for family engagement](#) through our coaching program.
- assist in the development of resources for families.
- help form a community of practice to further support quality engagement in Ontario.
- coordinate and lead our soon-to-be established family advisory council.

What’s next?

We are in the process of establishing our family advisory council, akin to our youth advisory council. The family advisory council will be comprised of diverse family members from across the province’s various communities. They will help inform our work to ensure we are responding to the needs of families in the child and youth mental health sector.



 1,114
DOWNLOADS
OF THE FAMILY
ENGAGEMENT
RESOURCE GUIDE



E-MENTAL HEALTH

Guiding quality e-mental health services

Child and youth mental health agencies in Ontario are eager for guidance on the use of e-mental health technologies. Although the evidence base about what works (and what doesn't) is growing, there are no standards or guidelines to help organizations to provide virtual care.

To that end, we've assembled an advisory group to help us develop provincial quality standards or guidelines for e-mental health. Our goal is to support community-based agencies to thoughtfully integrate digital and e-mental health technologies to meet the service needs of children, youth and families.

We looked for provincial and national experts, agency leaders already focusing on e-mental health in Ontario and young people and family members with interest or experience in this area. The committee met for the first time in March and, following some initial groundwork, selected two topics of focus to begin with.

What's next?

In 2020-21, we'll be developing guidelines for virtual walk-in services as well as staff training in e-mental health.

“

When we first started looking into virtual counselling (with an Innovation Initiative grant from the Centre), we could have really used what will come out of this work. We're glad to bring what we learned to the table. It will be significant in helping others move into the virtual space in a much quicker, more supported way. I'm very excited and I'm really impressed with the breadth of people the Centre has involved on the committee.”

— **Debra Woodfine**, Clinical Manager
Phoenix Centre for Children and Families
Member of the Centre's e-mental health advisory group

ADVISORY
GROUP MADE
UP OF

8

CONTENT EXPERTS,
CLINICIANS, YOUNG
PEOPLE AND
FAMILY MEMBERS



Digital and e-mental health solutions present many potential benefits including cost savings, improved access to services and healthcare experience, and better efficacy. This work is especially timely, as organizations of all kinds have had to shift online in the wake of the pandemic response. Positive outcomes of this difficult period will be a significant amount of quick learning about e-mental health possibilities, limitations and current gaps, and momentum to further explore and evaluate e-mental health options.

Investing in research and innovation

In today's digital world, we know that there are yet-to-be-discovered solutions to the challenges that Ontario's children, youth and families face as they seek mental health help. That's why in addition to setting quality standards or guidelines for e-mental health, we have set our sights on supporting research and innovation related to e-mental health services.

Child/Youth eMental Health Impact Grants

We partnered with Mental Health Research Canada to offer research grants to advance new, evidence-based digital solutions that have the potential for broad impact. We plan to announce the selected recipients and projects by summer 2020. These unique grants involve both lead agencies or core service providers and academic partners working together on an innovative project.

Innovation Initiatives

Since 2017, our Innovation Initiatives program has supported child and youth mental health agencies to turn their bold ideas into potential solutions aimed at improving service quality and access. The [third round of projects](#) was originally scheduled to wrap up by September 2020. However, due to several disruptions, including teacher strikes and the COVID-19 pandemic, we have extended support to March 2021.

While these projects are all aimed at addressing access issues, the majority focus specifically on e-mental health solutions. For example:

- developing and testing an app designed to bolster resilience and positive emotions among youth experiencing mental health struggles
- building and testing a platform for a virtual walk-in for youth and training staff to deliver counseling services by videoconference
- co-creating e-learning modules in various languages with young people with lived experience in the mental health system
- scoping a webinar platform to help with service navigation and waitlist management.



With the Innovation Initiative grant from the Centre, we collaborated with the Toronto Catholic District School Board to design, develop and test a social emotional learning program for children. So far, they're absolutely loving it and parents and teachers are reporting great outcomes. The Centre's support, guidance and flexibility has been unbelievably helpful, especially as we have faced many hiccups (like COVID-19) and we're doing a lot of learning as an organization."

— **Leticia Gracia**, Director, Institute of Childhood Trauma and Attachment
The George Hull Centre for Children and Families





SYSTEM INITIATIVES

Supporting engagement for youth wellness hubs

Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario (YWHO) aims to provide young people with the right services at the right time, in the right place. This includes mental health and addictions services, crisis support, primary care and social supports for employment, housing and income, all available on a walk-in basis.

The Centre is part of the backbone team (along with the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health's Provincial System Support Program) working to ensure diverse young people and families are engaged at both the provincial level and within local hubs. We support all 10 hubs in various ways, including to develop hub-specific engagement work plans and to achieve what YWHO identifies as core components of youth and family engagement within a youth-driven model.

Over the past year we have:

- hosted meetings for both the provincial youth advisory council and the provincial family advisory council — the groups that advise YWHO at a provincial level.

- helped to ensure that young people and families are meaningfully engaged as co-creators in service and hub design, governance and implementation, and evaluation processes at the local hub level
- continued evaluation of youth and family engagement processes.
- worked with sites to embed family voice on supports offered specifically for families.

“YWHO’s provincial youth advisory council has given youth from all over Ontario space to speak our minds and make a difference in a way that feels good to us. Those leading the council have been fantastic allies. Having people around you who treat you like an equal makes a huge difference. Being involved and feeling like we have the space to speak about things that matters to us — has a huge positive impact on our confidence and independence”

— **Joey Varga**, Peer Ambassador,
Haliburton County Youth Hub
Member of the YWHO provincial
youth advisory council



Collaborating to support post-secondary students

Since 2013, we have partnered with ConnexOntario, Kids Help Phone and Ontario 211 to offer Good2Talk—a free, confidential support for post-secondary students. Our partners provide client service: professional counselling, information and referral services for mental health, addictions and well-being. The Centre, meanwhile, is responsible for leading the evaluation of the service and developing training resources for Good2Talk staff.

Data analysis is ongoing through the spring of 2020, and the evaluation report on the telephone service will be submitted in June to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU, who funds Good2Talk). Soon, we will also be evaluating the text-based support, a Good2Talk service expansion announced by the MCU in February 2020.

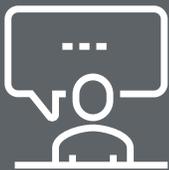
Over the past year we have produced six training resources:

- the experiences of Indigenous post-secondary students
- academic stress
- international students' mental health
- compassion fatigue and wellness
- eating disorders
- [young carers and how to support them](#)

“

With call volume exceeding targets and a constantly changing student population, the resources the Centre provides are very welcomed and well-received by our front line at 211. The topics are timely, and the information is well put together and easy for staff to navigate. It makes it easier to keep up on evolving knowledge on subjects like eating disorders and young carers. Plus, the learning doesn't just help in our work with Good2Talk, but on our other helplines as well.”

— **Jacky Roddy**, Good2Talk Coordinator
Ontario 211



6

TRAINING
RESOURCES
CREATED FOR
GOOD2TALK
STAFF



Helping agency leaders define and address provincial priorities

Over the years, we have worked closely with the Child and Youth Mental Health Lead Agency Consortium (LAC) and its members to mobilize key initiatives aimed at strengthening the system as a whole. Through the Provincial Priorities Report, the LAC identifies key challenges and opportunities in Ontario's child and youth mental health system and offers recommendations to government and decision makers across sectors to continually strengthen service delivery. The four priorities outlined in the 2019 report are about improving:

- service experience
- alignment of mental health assessment across the province
- access to services
- outcomes for children and youth with the most complex needs, receiving live-in treatment services

Through 2019-20, we coordinated and hosted meetings to advance work related to these four priorities and provided expertise and support on specific projects. For example, we gathered information about how the InterRAI (a suite of common assessment tools) has been implemented and used by Ontario's child and youth mental health lead agencies and core service providers, including an understanding of users' experiences with the tools. As well, we have co-led work related to facilitating access to services. This has involved working to develop a more robust definition of access linked to key performance indicators. Work in this area will continue through this coming year.

"The right service at the right time, in the right place, from the right people, at the right cost." Working group's improved definition of access.



“

As an active member and partner in the development of the child and youth mental health Provincial Priorities Report, the Centre provides valuable resources that push the conversation forward, enabling change and increasing quality within our sector. Centre staff also bring knowledge, experience and evidence to each conversation with provincial leaders.”

— **Cynthia Weaver**, Chief Operating Officer
Kinark Child and Family Services



Responding quickly to our sector's resource needs

We've always worked to provide Ontario agencies, communities and decision makers with the knowledge, capacity, connections and tools they need to address child and youth mental health challenges. Quickly adapting to our sector's and our partners' evolving needs is a big part of this.

This has perhaps never been more crucial than at this time, as our province and our sector feel the impact of a global pandemic, which has fundamentally changed service delivery. As soon as the COVID-19 crisis hit, we began fielding requests and responding with evidence-informed resources, including some in partnership with Children's Mental Health Ontario. Topics covered include:

- supporting parents and caregivers to talk to children and youth about COVID-19
- e-mental health service delivery
- supporting teams working from home and remote clinical supervision
- privacy considerations related to e-mental health service delivery
- compassion fatigue and the impact of COVID-19 on care providers
- the impacts of pandemic/regional emergencies on child and youth mental health service delivery post-pandemic

We also hosted a webinar with School Mental Health Ontario to increase comfort and confidence in delivering virtual care. The response was overwhelming: we reached our registration limit within a couple of day! Nearly 790 people participated in the live webinar and we made the [recording](#) available afterward.

We recognize the impact that the pandemic continues to have on the sector and how vitally important these mental health services will continue to be throughout and after the pandemic. We are committed to supporting agencies' and communities' evolving information and resource needs

“

We very much appreciate the Centre's quick response to our request for resources on providing information and supports to children and youth related to COVID-19. We have shared widely and many child and youth mental health and addictions service providers in Champlain are equally grateful for so quickly receiving these lists of practical, evidence-based, quality resources in both English and French.”

— **Monica Armstrong**, Child and Youth Mental Health System Transformation Lead
Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa

In April 2019 we published [Clearing the air: Informing conversations about cannabis](#) in partnership with Addictions and Mental Health Ontario. In addition to those who accessed it online, this learning resource was wildly popular with attendees at conferences and events with more than 400 hard copies picked up over the course of the year.



1,109

DOWNLOADS OF
CANNABIS PAPER;

1,205

DOWNLOADS OF
EVIDENCE SUMMARY





Supporting the development and implementation of Ontario Structured Psychotherapy

Announced publicly in March 2020, Ontario Structured Psychotherapy is the Ontario government's new program to provide publicly funded structured psychotherapy for people living with depression and anxiety. Based on successful work in the UK, this is the first such program in Canada, and a key part of Roadmap to Wellness (the province's new plan for the mental health and addictions system).

We have been supporting the creation of this for children and youth since 2019, facilitating the meaningful engagement of youth and families in the development of the approach and mobilizing relevant evidence to guide the creation of an evidence-based, developmentally appropriate model of service delivery.

What's next?

As the program for children, youth and families evolves in the coming year, we'll continue to contribute engagement and evidence supports to its implementation.

“

From my role in this initiative, I've seen fabulous collaboration. The Centre has been instrumental in ensuring that the task groups who are preparing recommendations for government to shape this program all have the latest evidence in front of them. I anticipate this will improve access to consistent, high quality structured psychotherapy for children, youth and families across the province, and help clinicians feel well-supported in delivering those services.”

— **Joanna Henderson**, Director, Margaret and Wallace McCain Centre for Child, Youth & Family Mental Health

Senior Scientist in the Child, Youth and Emerging Adult Program, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health



Helping create an innovative model to support Ontario Health Teams

When the Ontario government announced changes to the way health care is delivered in Ontario, CHEO and many other child- and youth-serving organizations across the Champlain region jumped at the opportunity to propose a unique, regional model offering comprehensive, high-quality health services tailored for young people. Focusing especially on mental health and addictions and medically complex needs for the first year, the proposal sought to help other local Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) access pediatric expertise and provide the specialized care, support and services our youngest Ontarians require.

The Centre was an early partner for the Kids Come First OHT proposal, supporting the overall application process and ensuring that child and youth mental health priorities would be adequately addressed. We also participated on tables around quality improvement and mental health and addictions services and supported engagement efforts throughout the process.

Though Kids Come First was not selected in the first wave of OHTs, Deputy Premier Christine Elliott called it “an innovative model of child and youth wellness that has the potential to enhance the delivery of a full continuum of care for children across Eastern Ontario.” She expressed provincial support for ongoing collaboration to determine how Kids Come First could improve care for families and support the work of other local OHTs — beginning with the Ottawa OHT.

We remain a proud partner of Kids Come First. We’re committed to continuing to integrate evidence and best practices from our other work — like primary care pathways — and to draw upon lessons learned to inform how this type of model could be applied elsewhere in the province.

“What is really great about Kids Come First is the breadth of partners who have come together from all aspects of the pediatric health system and some of the important social systems. We figured out how to work collaboratively to close gaps that our organizations see, but don’t have the mandate or manpower to address alone. The Centre brought strength to the organizing had a significant part in pulling together the application. That collaboration and planning helped us pivot quickly to address some of the urgent needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic, which speaks to the strength and value of this model”

— **Ken Farion**, Medical Director, Quality and Systems Improvement
CHEO



KIDS COME FIRST

61

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND NEARLY

1,100

PHYSICIANS COMMITTED TO MAKING CHILD AND YOUTH HEALTH SERVICES EASIER TO OBTAIN.



Making recommendations to evaluate value-for-money of services

In August 2019 we published the [report of the provincial caseload guidelines working group](#), which we co-chaired with Children’s Mental Health Ontario. The working group was convened in response to the Auditor General of Ontario’s 2016 report calling for the development of caseload guidelines to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of Ontario’s child and youth mental health services. Through an extensive review of existing evidence and data collection practices at agencies in Ontario, the group found that many of the building blocks required for developing and implementing such guidelines are still being put into place.

The report outlined four recommendations to the Ministry:

- 1) Focus on workload (rather than caseload) to more accurately reflect the value-for-money of the services provided by child and youth mental health agencies in Ontario.
- 2) Establish consistent definitions for the types of workload data that are measured, and consistent processes to collect and analyze this data.



- 3) Collect baseline data on direct and indirect service hours for core services, then use a developmental approach to establish targets (as there is little evidence in the literature to establish a guideline for immediate implementation).
- 4) Develop a comprehensive quality framework to integrate multiple dimensions of service quality, with standardized assessment tools on client experiences and outcomes.

 **553**
DOWNLOADS
OF CASELOAD/
WORKLOAD
GUIDELINES
FINAL REPORT

“As someone who was relatively new working in the field, being a part of the advisory group provided a great opportunity to learn more about how some of these policies come into place, what’s feasible and what would be most supportive for service providers and for youth. The Centre team was really supportive, making sure I fully understood, so I could participate in a meaningful way.”

— **Nicole D’Souza**, Counselor

Youth representative, Caseload guidelines advisory group





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TIMES TRAINING
WEBINARS HAVE
BEEN VIEWED

Providing guidance for data sharing and data governance

A few years ago, our Ministry partners began working to implement a business intelligence (BI) solution to aggregate data and help inform system planning for child and youth mental health in Ontario. We were brought on board to develop and lead the training component for phase 1 of the BI Solution because of our experience supporting performance measurement and evaluation in the sector.

Through 2019–20, we:

- completed delivery of the training modules and accompanying resources (e.g. tip sheets, manuals)
- conducted a needs assessment and delivered a webinar around privacy and data sharing
- provided a template for data sharing agreements and another to help lead agencies review their policies and develop guidelines around data governance.
- worked closely with a handful of lead agencies to identify organizational policy gaps and create sample data governance policies that can be shared with other agencies

Most recently, we brought together agencies using the province’s most common client information system for a second learning event. We had to rethink our plans, however, given restrictions on gatherings with the onset of COVID-19 just days before the event was to take place. The day was split into three separate virtual events, and the Centre hosted a Ministry update on the BI Solution. Our hope is to reschedule the full day event for later in the year.

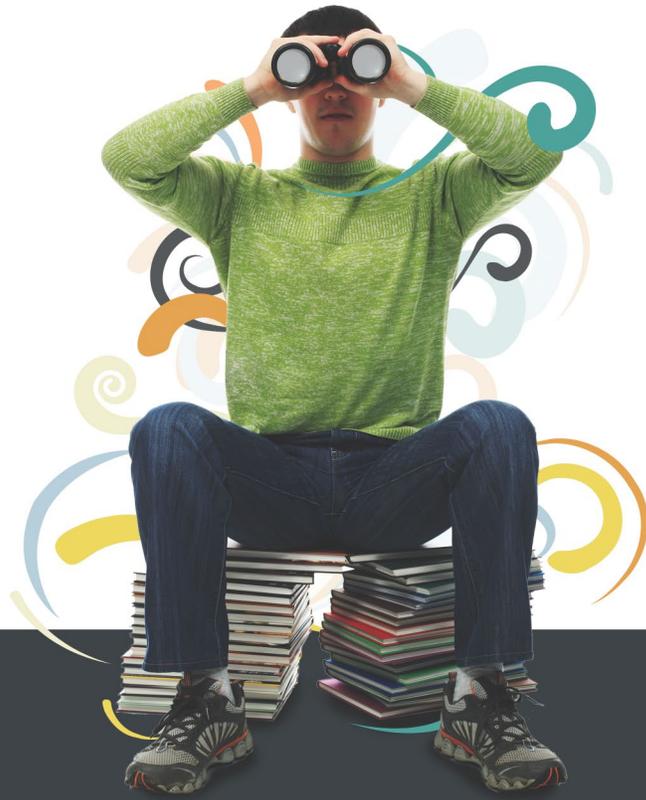


Data is only as good as the quality and consistency of practices, and yet data sharing was a problem as there wasn’t any formal mechanism for doing that. We worked closely with the Centre and lead agencies to get formal data sharing agreements in place. Part of that agreement is to ensure that the needed governance, policies and procedures are in place to support it. It’s quite timely given the forklift on the use of data with what’s going on in the world; this will help agencies to evaluate and adapt.”

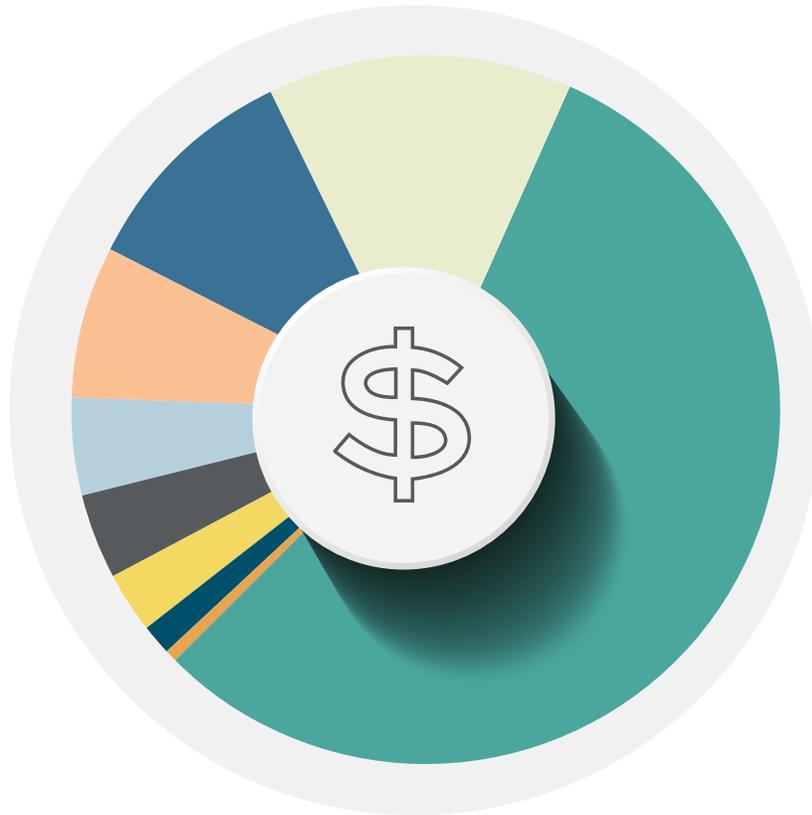
— **Tricia Burbridge**, Chief Administrative Officer

Lutherwood





INVESTMENTS



	Staff development \$39,783		Purchased services \$408,002
	Communications and translation \$79,819		Demonstration projects and capacity-building grants \$612,815
	Staff travel and accommodation \$169,265		Rent and administration \$808,079
	Office supplies and equipment \$222,509		Salaries and benefits \$3,293,344
	Stakeholder meetings and events \$266,383		
			\$5,899,999
			TOTAL

WORKING ACROSS ONTARIO

KENORA

- FEQS, youth forum, YWHO

PEMBROKE

- primary care pathways

HALIBURTON

- YWHO

ALGOMA

- primary care pathways

MARKHAM

- YEQS

SUDBURY

- Innovation Initiative

MIDLAND

- YWHO

TORONTO

- FEQS, primary care pathways, Quest X 3, QI pilot, YWHO X 2, Innovation Initiative X 3

SIMCOE

- Early years pathways

MISSISSAUGA

- YWHO

HALTON

- Innovation Initiative

WATERLOO

- YEQS

YORK HILLS [OR RICHMOND HILL]

- youth forum

HAMILTON

- Early years pathways, FEQS, YEQS, Quest, Innovation Initiative

LONDON

- Quest, QI pilot

WINDSOR

- primary care pathways



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mentale des enfants et des adolescents