

YOUTH WELLNESS HUBS ONTARIO

Background

The evidence is clear that there is a disconnect between the needs of youth in Ontario and their access to mental health and addiction services. Research indicates that by age 16, 35 per cent of people have experienced a mental disorder¹ and 70 per cent of adult mental illness begins during adolescence or earlier². We also know that less than one third of youth will receive targeted services³, and that there was a 32 per cent increase in emergency room visits for youth mental health and addictions from 2006 to 2011⁴. The data also show us that death by suicide occurs more frequently than death due to cancer for youth between the ages of 15 and 24.⁵ The system needs to change to better meet the needs of youth.

Youth Wellness Hubs Initiative

In February 2017, Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, announced funding support for up to nine integrated service hubs to address access issues and other gaps in the province's youth service system, including improving the service experience of transition-aged youth (age 18-25). At these hubs, young people between the ages of 12 and 25 will be able to receive walk-in mental health and substance use services, as well as other health, social, and employment supports all under one roof.

Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario (YWHO) is a new program entity that has been put in place to make this happen. YWHO builds on similar initiatives already underway in Canada, such as ACCESS Open Minds (Pan-Canadian) and Foundry (British Columbia), as well as previous international initiatives in Ireland (Jigsaw) and Australia (Headspace).

¹ Costello et al., 2003

² Kessler et al., 2007

³ Merikangas et al., 2011

⁴ ICES ScoreCard, 2016

⁵ Statistics Canada, 2012

Vision:

*Getting youth the **right kinds of services at the right time by the right provider in the right place***

Youth Wellness Hubs will serve youth aged 12-25 with the following services:

- Mental health
- Substance use
- Primary care
- Education, employment and training
- Housing and other community and social services
- Peer support and care navigation

YWHO Core Values:

- Youth-centred & family-supportive services
- Meaningful engagement and co-creation
- Increasing visibility and addressing stigma
- Collaboration
- Evaluation & quality



There are also four existing research-funded hubs in Scarborough, Toronto East, Central Toronto (YouthCan IMPACT), and Chatham-Kent (ACCESS Open Minds) and many communities across the province are beginning to deliver hub-like services.

The YWHO initiative will serve as a critical step toward improving Ontario's mental health and addiction services for youth and young adults by:

- Providing rapid access to easily identifiable mental health and substance use services with walk-in, low-barrier services and clear service pathways
- Providing evidence-based interventions matched to individuals' level of need, and supported transitions to specialized care services when the severity of need is evident
- Integrating mental health, substance use, primary care, vocational, housing and other support services into a one-stop-shop model of care offered in a youth-friendly space
- Reducing transitions between services through co-location and shared services in a single place
- Establishing common evaluation across sites
- Co-creating services with youth & families

YWHO Leadership & Partners

With Dr. Joanna Henderson from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) as the lead, YWHO is comprised of expertise from the Provincial System Support Program at CAMH and the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health of CHEO. YWHO reflects a partnership between the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Child and Youth Services, with support from the Graham Boeckh Foundation. The YWHO team is working closely with stakeholders from across the province, including youth and their families, to inform every aspect of the initiative at the provincial and hub-specific level. This includes engaging specific equity-seeking groups of youth, such as First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, LGBTQ+, Francophone, immigrant, refugee, ethno-cultural, and racialized youth, and youth with disabilities.

Call for Proposals

A Call for Proposals will soon be released with detailed criteria for agencies and networks wishing to implement a Youth Wellness Hub in their own community. Proposals will be assessed for these criteria as well as community need and readiness for implementation.

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