
What Experts Are Saying About Improving Mental Health Services for Children and Youth

June 22, 2011

“Children’s Mental Health Ontario is pleased with the government’s commitment to improving services for young people across the province with mental health issues. These financial investments will assist in providing the highest quality treatment efficiently and effectively, allowing for the best possible outcomes for young people and their families. We look forward to working with Minister Broten on the implementation of these investment priorities.”

- Gordon Floyd, CEO Children’s Mental Health Ontario

“Today’s announcement by Minister Laurel Broten is an important and positive step, prioritizing family-centred and direct services. The range of government initiatives, including support for the Navigator/Support Services for families marks real progress toward comprehensive reform of child and youth mental health services.”

- Sarah Cannon, Executive Director, Parents for Children’s Mental Health

“This investment will help to save lives and change futures. Through the leadership of the Government of Ontario in recognizing children’s mental health as a priority, we can collectively bring hope, optimism and possibilities to the children and families we serve.”

- Calvin Younger, Board Chair, Hinks-Dellcrest Treatment Centre

"Investing in the early years, when more than 70 per cent of mental disorders begin, is critical to good outcomes later in life. The Government’s cross-sectoral approach to children’s mental health and emphasis on early intervention is an important step forward in a province-wide mental health strategy".

- Catherine Zahn, President and CEO, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

“Today’s announcement offers critical support to people living with mental illness and addiction and their families. The strategy has the essential ingredients needed to enable a true and effective continuum of care and support. By having tangible mechanisms of accountability in place, we can ensure we remain on the right track in delivering mental health care to all Ontarians. With emphasis in the first stage on early-intervention with children and youth, coupled with ways to improve timely access and resources, today’s announcement is an impressive and right step forward. We welcome the opportunity of working with the various Ministries and our partners in implementing this vital strategy”.

- George Weber, President and CEO, The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Group

“Investing in the mental health of children and youth is an investment in Ontario’s future sustainability, cohesiveness and prosperity. There has never been a better time for Ontarians to join the conversation and advocate together for a concrete commitment to improved mental health supports and services.”

- Catherine Fife, President, Ontario Public School Boards’ Association

“I applaud what Minister Matthews and her department are doing in this area. It’s where mental health has to start. The government of Ontario has taken a major step forward with the release of this strategy. I’m pleased to see Ontario adopt an “all-of-government” approach to mental

health and addictions, given the number of government departments with a role to play in improving the mental health of Ontarians. I'm also pleased to see the comprehensive nature of the strategy, which focuses on everything from stigma reduction to the training of first responders."

- Michael Kirby, Chair, Mental Health Commission of Canada

"It is so refreshing that the Government of Ontario appears to understand the day to day realities faced by those with mental illness and/or addictions. In tough times, issues like mental illness tend to lose the focus of government, but not in this case. The report benefits greatly from the input sought from all sectors. Though ideally, coffers would have overflowed to correct the long-standing issues, these tough times dictate restraint. Nonetheless, this places us solidly on the right road. I am especially pleased with the intent to get behind a more integrated system of supports that reduces barriers to employment."

- Pat Capponi, Psychiatric Survivor, Lead Facilitator - Voices From the Street

"Addiction and Mental Health issues have been pushed to the sidelines for too long. With this announcement today and the commitment to mental health and addictions in the recent budget, Ontario has decided to make sure that this is no longer the case. Starting with children and youth and by addressing the other parts of the strategy, Ontario is now on the road to recovery".

- David Kelly, Executive Director Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs

"Ontario's doctors want to congratulate the government on the release of a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy. A renewed focus on mental health, especially children's mental health was a key plank in our election platform released earlier this year and we look forward to working closely with the government on the implementation of the strategy to ensure patients get the care and services they need."

- Dr. Stewart Kennedy, President, Ontario Medical Association

"The earlier we can identify mental illness, the greater the chances of a successful recovery. Provisions in the 10-year mental health strategy will help educate key professions and the general public to recognize and respond to symptoms more quickly."

- Mary Alberti, CEO, Schizophrenia Society of Ontario

"If mental health is the orphan of the health care system, then youth mental health is the orphan of the orphan. Child and youth mental health is everyone's business. Early detection and intervention is key. We need to build a mental health literacy among teachers, physicians, police officers, coaches, judges and lawyers, dentists, clergy, child welfare and youth justice workers...anyone coming into contact with children and young people. We need to listen to young voices to "get it right".

- Shelagh Rogers, Order of Canada, Host, CBC Radio One, *The Next Chapter*

"AEFO welcomes the new investments in mental health services for children and youth in the province. Young people facing mental health issues must be able to access specialized help quickly. Otherwise, their learning and indeed their future can be jeopardized."

- Anne Vinet-Roy, vice-présidente de l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens

"The government acknowledged in this year's budget that resources are needed to ensure that the province's mental health support systems are responsive to the needs of children and youth. OCSTA welcomes the government's investment in a Mental Health and Addictions Strategy that will begin with children and youth."

- Nancy Kirby, President, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

“Stephanie and I support turning conversations about mental health and suicide into real actions and initiatives that will raise awareness and provide early-intervention in schools, in sport arenas and in the workplace. We feel that focusing on child and youth will help keep our youth healthy and alive.”

- Luke Richardson, Father, Assistant Coach, Ottawa Senators

“In the Ontario budget tabled in March, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) was pleased to see the province’s commitment to child and youth mental health. The release of Open Minds, Healthy Minds places that commitment in the context of a comprehensive, integrated strategy to address mental health and addictions in Ontario. This strategy, and the actions which will flow from it, will help to improve the mental health of people across Ontario,”

- Louise Bradley, President and CEO, Mental Health Commission of Canada

“We welcome this announcement as new annualized dollars and investment in aboriginal child and youth mental health is the right thing to do. Mental health often goes unaddressed in the lives of Aboriginal children. We are very encouraged that the government has recognized the unique needs of Aboriginal children. With this investment we can begin doing the important work that needs to be done in our community.”

- Kenn Richard, Executive Director, Native Child and Family Services of Toronto

“Improving mental health supports for children and youth represents our best chance to make a life-changing difference – now and for years to come.”

- Dr. Ian Manion, Executive Director, Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health

“I commend the Ontario Government for investing in early identification and access to children’s mental health services which will significantly improve health outcomes for Ontario’s children.”

- Mary Jo Haddad, President and CEO, Hospital for Sick Children

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