

Policy ready paper on the interface between primary care and community-based child and youth mental health services in Ontario

The Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health (the Centre) works to support child and youth mental health (CYMH) agencies across the province in using evidence to strengthen care. At the service area level, we offer a range of collaborative tools, resources and services to strengthen skills and knowledge while promoting evidence-informed practice and enhanced mental health outcomes for children and youth. At the system level, we support and lead coordinated and consistent evidence-informed approaches to enhance service planning and delivery.

The Centre's [policy ready papers](#) bring together the latest evidence on a topic of relevance for policy development in child and youth mental health. These products begin with extensive consultation with key stakeholders (policy-makers, organizational leaders, youth and families), and are developed with respected experts who review the latest evidence on a specific topics and offer targeted, actionable recommendations for policy-making. The Centre has produced 16 policy ready papers since 2008 on a range of topics, including *Governance in the transitioning child and youth mental health system*, *Value-based planning for allocations of core services*, *Meeting the mental health needs of Ontario's newcomer youth* and *Child and youth mental health in the early years (ages 0-6)*.

Long waitlists, limited access and funding for community based services make it necessary to ensure a more efficient and effective system of mental health care. The goal is to establish more collaborative, coordinated partnerships across primary care and child and youth mental health sectors. Many families first attempt to access child and youth mental health care through their family doctor or hospital emergency department. Physicians, however, often report feeling ill-equipped to manage child and youth mental health concerns.

Our next policy paper will focus on summarizing the latest knowledge on evidence-informed approaches to ensuring a seamless interface between Ontario's primary care system (family physicians and community/general pediatricians) and community-based child and youth mental health service systems.

Given discussions presently taking place regarding primary health care reform in our province, and as activities related to *Moving on Mental Health* are implemented, there is an opportunity to gather knowledge on evidence-informed models of care relevant to Ontario's context. This policy paper will explore these models and make recommendations for policy development aimed at strengthening primary mental health care. This policy ready paper also aims to provide guidance on evidence-informed approaches for building capacity (through education and support) among family physicians and community pediatricians to address child and youth mental health concerns.

The proposed goals of this policy ready paper are:

- 1) To summarize current evidence related to the interface between primary care and child and youth mental health sectors.

- 2) To explore evidence-informed models used to guide work in this area through a comprehensive environmental scan.
- 3) To make concrete recommendations for policy development to strengthen the interface between primary care and community based child and youth mental health organizations rooted in our understanding of what works in this area.

Key activities	Timelines	Completed
Engage with ministry partners (MCYS) to discuss and scope policy ready paper	January, 2016	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Engage a steering committee to guide the proposed work (with membership from the College of Family Physicians, the Association of Ontario Health Centres, and others)	January – March, 2016	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Identify potential lead authors		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Develop and post <i>Request for Quotes</i> from potential lead authors, identify winning bidder and finalize contract		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Engage stakeholders (policy-makers, organizational leaders, youth and families) in consultations to guide development of policy ready paper	March – July 2016	
Research and writing, develop knowledge mobilization plan	May – September 2016	
Finalize draft, circulate to stakeholders for feedback and make revisions	October - November 2016	
Finalize policy ready paper and mobilize widely	November 2016	