

For Information

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**DATE:** September 22, 2011

**REPORT TITLE: PROVINCIAL TEN YEAR MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS STRATEGY AND RECENT SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR PEEL**

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## **OBJECTIVE**

To provide an update on a new mental health and addictions strategy for Ontario, and the service enhancements that have been announced for child and youth mental health services in Peel.

### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- The Region of Peel has supported the advocacy efforts of the community and has urged the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) to develop and implement a Strategy that addresses the health system capacity issues facing high-growth communities.
- In June 2011 the MOHLTC released the Open Minds, Healthy Minds: Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy (the "Strategy") which takes a long-term view to transforming Ontario's mental health system over the next 10 years.
- The needs of children and youth are the focus for the first three years of the Strategy. Intervening early and assisting youth who are transitioning to adult programs will be key goals for the province.
- The MOHLTC and Ministry of Children and Youth Services have each made funding announcements aimed at enhancing access to mental health and addictions services for children and youth in Peel.
- Funding announcements that allocate new program spending based on the child and youth population indicate that the provincial government is moving towards a funding model that is based on population need.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Background**

In recent years, there has been growing concern across communities, governments and ministries, health service providers, and other stakeholders that mental health and addictions services are not adequately meeting the needs of Ontario residents.

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Broad reforms to the mental health and addictions system in Ontario are needed. The functioning of this part of Ontario's health system impacts that of the broader system of health and human services.

As Council is aware, this issue has added importance to Peel. Peel's rapidly growing and changing community has placed extraordinary demands on mental health and addictions services. This has meant many residents cannot get timely access to available services.

The MOHLTC committed, in spring 2009, to develop a 10-year mental health and addictions strategy for Ontario. A panel of experts charged with making recommendations to the MOHLTC on such a strategy completed their consultations and released their final report in December 2010. In addition, the Ontario Legislature also formed an all-party Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions to recommend reforms to the mental health system in Ontario.

In response to the January 13 report to Council titled "Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Strategy Update", Council resolved that:

- The Regional Chair and senior staff continue to meet with both Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) to advocate for increased provincial funding and access to community mental health and addictions programs; and
- The Intergovernmental Relations Advisory Committee continues its advocacy for the completion and implementation of a provincial 10-year mental health and addictions strategy.

**a) The Region's Strategic Interest in Mental Health and Addictions**

The Region of Peel does not have a mandate to directly deliver mental health and addictions services. However, many Regional programs refer clients to services delivered by the Region's community partners in this sector. As previously reported to Council, the capacity of these services to adequately respond to growing needs in Peel has been hampered by low per capita funding.

The Region has been engaged in the issues of growing poverty, youth violence, and domestic violence and has recognized the impact of mental health on each of these issues. The Term of Council Priority to "build community capacity" includes advocating to the provincial government to complete the mental health and addictions strategy and increased funding for these services in Peel.

**b) Regional Advocacy**

The Region of Peel supported the advocacy efforts of the community and has urged the MOHLTC to develop and implement the mental health and addictions strategy that addresses the health system capacity issues facing high-growth communities.

The Region's position on mental health and addictions is as follows:

- That the province align the efforts of all levels of government to increase system capacity; and
- That the Strategy builds capacity in high-growth communities by creating better access to prevention and treatment services, and funding that reflects population growth.

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In January 2011, a delegation to Council by the Canadian Mental Health Association emphasized that the all-party commitment to push ahead with reforms to the province's mental health system is a unique opportunity to address long-standing issues facing this sector. This delegation also underscored:

- The growing demand for services in Peel due to growth and diversity; and
- The very low per capita funding for services in Peel affecting access to child, youth and adult services.

Most recently, the Intergovernmental Relations Advisory Committee has highlighted this issue in a meeting with Minister Matthews of the MOHLTC at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference in August 2011. As well, advocacy on the need to improve access to mental health and addictions services in Peel has been highlighted through the *Peel Asks Why* campaign.

### 2. Findings

In June 2011, the MOHLTC released the "Open Minds, Healthy Minds: Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy" (the "Strategy"). The Strategy takes a long-term view to transforming Ontario's mental health system over the next 10 years, with a focus on implementing reforms for children and youth services, particularly regarding early identification and intervention for mental health issues.

The mission of the Strategy is to "reduce the burden of mental illness and addictions by ensuring that all Ontarians have timely access to an integrated system of excellent, coordinated and efficient promotion, prevention, early intervention, community support and treatment programs."

In addition, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services announced 257 million dollars over three years towards services for children and youth, namely to:

- Hire more workers at community-based agencies;
- Place mental health workers and nurses in schools; and to
- Hire more mental health court workers.

A copy of the Strategy can be accessed at [www.health.gov.on.ca](http://www.health.gov.on.ca).

#### a) A Framework for Reform

The Strategy is a very high level framework for reforming services, setting out four goals for improving quality and access to mental health and addictions services:

- Improving mental health and well-being for everyone;
- Creating healthy, resilient, inclusive communities;
- Identifying mental health and addictions problems early and intervene; and
- Providing high-quality health and other human services.

#### b) Strategic Directions

The Strategy offers broad policy direction with some firm commitments for reform to mental health and addictions services. Many of the details for moving ahead on these goals have yet to be developed.

Based on the four goals, the following is an outline of directions and commitments of interest to the Peel community:

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**i) Building Individual Capacity**

Children and youth with mental health and addictions issues will be assessed and treated faster. Coordinated and high quality services will be delivered closer to home. Awareness programs (peer support and counselling) for individuals and targeted populations (e.g. newcomers and others) will increase individual resilience to those facing life challenges.

**ii) Building Community Capacity**

The Strategy promises to build partnerships with programs across all levels of government and to build mental health and addictions services into more accessible locations, namely through community hubs. Policies and programs will reflect the housing and employment challenges faced by those with a mental illness and/or addiction.

The Strategy refers to the provincial government's early learning, poverty reduction and long-term affordable housing strategies, and coming recommendations from the Social Assistance Review Committee. As such, the Strategy makes high-level commitments to further these strategies in ways that assist individuals with mental health and addictions issues, emphasizing policy-level changes to housing and employment programs.

**iii) Intervening Early**

Identifying and treating a mental illness or addiction at its early stages will rely on various measures to increase capacity of first responders (eg. law enforcement), schools and primary care providers (family doctors) to intervene through referral or treatment.

**iv) Service Integration**

Reforms will integrate mental health services with addictions services and the rest of the health system to help people access services through any one of a number of "doors", and through further collaboration between service providers. Gaps in services will be filled by establishing core institutional, residential and community based services at local and regional levels, and through new funding models that reflect population needs.

Demand on hospital emergency departments will be reduced by enhancing family health care, community-based services, and 24/7 emergency response services for mental health and addictions issues.

This section of the Strategy also aims to improve transitions and level of support for people across health and other human services (justice system, social services, and schools) and for youth transitioning to adult mental health services.

The Strategy commits service integration across a range of health and human services and the need to establish a basket of core services in each community.

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### v) Increasing Accountability

New accountability and performance tools that are familiar to other parts of the health system will be introduced to the mental health and addictions sector. This includes:

- Public reporting of wait times for mental health and addiction services;
- Accountability agreements setting performance expectations with service providers; and
- Annual quality improvement plans.

### c) Child and Youth Mental Health

The Strategy commits to increasing access to high quality services for children and youth over the next three years by:

- **Improving access to high quality services** by developing and implementing a Wait Times Strategy for these services, and targeting funding to child and youth mental health agencies to help these services respond, including services to divert youth from the justice system.
- **Identifying and intervening earlier** by implementing tools to help schools collaborate with health care providers and community agencies to assist children and youth. New teams of mental health workers and nurses in schools will provide direct services to children and youth with mental health issues.
- **Closing gaps in service for vulnerable children and youth** through efforts (service collaboratives) that help coordinate services for this group, especially those transitioning from youth to adult programs or youth moving between hospital inpatient services to outpatient services, as examples.

In March 2011, the 2011-12 provincial budget committed \$93 million per year over the next three years towards mental health services for children and youth.

### d) Strategy Implementation

Implementation of the Strategy will be a standing item with an existing committee of Assistant Deputy Ministers across 14 ministries (including MOHLTC, Finance, Children and Youth Services, Attorney General, Social Services, Community Safety and Corrections and others).

A new Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council comprised of stakeholders from community mental health, education, justice and municipal sectors, as well as organizations representing those using mental health and addictions services (consumers) will advise Assistant Deputy Ministers on the Strategy. The Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council, with the government, will develop options for future governance of the mental health and addictions sector. Progress reports will be published every two years.

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### 3. Recent Announcements to Enhance Services in Peel

The MOHLTC and Ministry of Children and Youth Services have each made funding announcements aimed at enhancing access to mental health and addictions services for children and youth in Peel.

#### a) Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Funding

For students, MOHLTC funding to Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) will fund new mental health and addictions nurses in school boards to provide supports and services to students with mental health or substance abuse issues. The 144 nursing positions across Ontario will be allocated based on a formula that considers student enrolment and other factors. These services are expected to be in place in schools by early 2012. For Peel, this translates into new full-time equivalent (FTE) nurses in schools, to be allocated as follows:

- Four FTE in Mississauga-Halton LHIN; and
- Six FTE in Central West LHIN (Brampton, Malton, Caledon, and Dufferin).

#### b) Ministry of Children and Youth Services Funding

In October 2011, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services announced \$3.6 million per year in additional funding to increase access to early intervention and treatment programs in schools and in the community in Peel.

- Peel Children's Centre and Associated Youth Services of Peel will be funded to hire an additional 16 mental health workers (FTE) in schools in Peel to help identify mental health issues sooner.
- Peel Children's Centre, Associated Youth Services of Peel, Nexus Youth Services, and Rapport Youth and Family Services will share targeted funding for 32 additional mental health workers (FTE) to reduce wait lists and wait times for existing counselling and treatment programs, and to establish several walk-in clinics for youth in Peel.

This funding was allocated to communities based on the child and youth population under 18 years.

### 4. Implications for Peel

Staff have reviewed the Strategy with particular attention to the issues raised by the Region concerning system capacity at the provincial level and to building service capacity in high growth regions like Peel, including funding to reflect population growth. The release of the Strategy and the recent funding announcements affecting child and youth mental health services are together very promising.

#### a) Equitable Funding

Funding announcements that allocate new program spending based on the child and youth population indicates that the provincial government is moving towards a funding model that is based on population need. It is not immediately clear whether these announcements will fill the funding gap for Peel, but this remains a very positive development.

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Commitments to increase resources to child and youth services in the next three years are encouraging for Peel. School-based services may provide earlier identification of issues, and may reduce wait times for community-based services. This is important as youth violence in Peel is understood in the context of poor access to school-based and community-based mental health services.

The broader commitment to review new funding models based on population needs has potential to increase funding for services in Peel when implemented. Identifying core regional and local mental health services does not ensure equity of access to these services from region to region. Community-based agencies responsible for delivering services have responded to the Strategy stating that the identification of a core basket of services to be an important first step to addressing inequities. However, increased funding is crucial to building a comprehensive and effective system.

Advocacy by the Region of Peel in advance of the 2011 provincial election emphasized that funding for many services has not kept pace with growth.

### **b) Mental Health System Issues**

The Region's position towards mental health and addictions issues has emphasized the need to address the fragmented nature of Ontario's current mental health and addictions system. It is promising to see that this work will be led at senior levels across 14 ministries and the involvement of other stakeholders in their advisory capacity on the Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Council. This will hopefully lead to a whole-of-government approach to system reforms.

It remains to be seen how progress will be made in developing an implementation plan with clear and measurable goals for the Strategy.

### **c) Housing and Employment**

The Strategy does not yet provide any detailed commitments for reforming the many housing and employment services. The Strategy recognizes the importance of housing and employment supports that work together for individuals with a mental illness and commits to broad efforts to change how these services address needs. The Strategy does not address the shortfall in supply of housing options for individuals with a mental illness and/or addiction and makes brief reference to the needs of seniors occupying alternate level of care beds, and long term care home residents.

Community-based providers in Peel indicate that further detail on employment and income supports such as Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program is needed. Enhancements to employment supports for people with a serious mental illness are not yet detailed.

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**CONCLUSION**

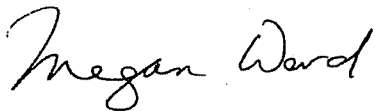
The 10-year mental health and addictions strategy has the potential to make important reforms to mental health services in Peel. New funding for community-based services suggests that the funding advocacy goals by the Region of Peel are beginning to be realized. Staff will continue to monitor and update Council on implementation of this Strategy and on progress regarding service enhancements in Peel.



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**Approved for Submission:**



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