

NEW

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Directions



Andre Van Vugt photos

Close to 1,000 delegates gathered in Toronto to attend Open Minds. Healthy Minds. Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy Summit. The event, hosted by David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and his Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions, marked the launch of *Every Door is the Right Door*, a discussion paper towards a 10-year mental health and addictions strategy. Delegates from across Ontario and a broad range of backgrounds attended, including: people who have lived with mental health illness and addictions, health care providers, community leaders, representatives from the justice and legal sectors, educators, government officials and employers.



Summit focuses on collaboration to improve mental health and addictions system

In July, Health and Long-Term Care Minister David Caplan and his Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions hosted a landmark summit to support the development of a mental health and addictions

strategy for the province. The Open Minds. Healthy Minds. Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy Summit, held in Toronto, provided an opportunity for

mental health and addictions consumers and stakeholders from across the health care, social service, education, justice, and business sectors to come together and collaborate. The event

also gave individuals and families who have experienced mental health and addictions challenges a chance to interact and network with health service providers, as well as provincial decision makers.

"This is an extraordinary gathering. It's a broad and diverse cross section of Ontarians united in a common purpose," Caplan said. "Whether you're young or old. Whether you provide services or use them. Whether you're an employer, in law enforcement or are a teacher. We all share the same objective: an improved mental health care system."

The minister told the close to 1,000 participants that they were

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Photos left: Summit delegates rolled up their sleeves and got down to work in the five breakout working sessions. Session topics included: Early Identification and Early Intervention, Healthy Communities, Consumer Partnership, System Design and Strengthening the Workforce. Feedback from these working sessions will be compiled by the Mental Health and Addictions Unit, Health Program Policy and Standards Branch, Health System Strategy, and provided to the Minister's Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions to help guide strategy development.



With Minister Caplan looking on, Aboriginal elder Pauline Shirt performs a traditional blessing ceremony with sage to open the summit.



Photo right: The day rounded out with a ministers' panel discussion. Each spoke about how mental health and addictions issues touch stakeholders within their ministries and how they will incorporate the future mental health and addictions strategy into their work. Joining Minister Caplan were, left to right, Chris Bentley, Attorney General of Ontario; Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education; Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion; and Aileen Carroll, Minister of Culture and Minister Responsible for Senior. Deb Matthews, Minister of Children and Youth Services, participated via prerecorded video message.



Photos above: A delegate views paintings by artists with lived experiences which were on display throughout the plenary room at the summit. The 18 pieces of art were provided by The Workman Arts Project of Ontario, an organization, which supports and facilitates aspiring, emerging and established artists with mental health and addictions issues.

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not only there for discussion, but also to contribute to a plan of action. "What we talk about today will help to frame Ontario's policies on mental health and addictions for the next decade. And with your help, I'm determined to have a finished strategy in place next year," Caplan said. It is estimated that one in five Ontarians will face a mental health illness or addiction during their lifetime.

The Ontario government has made a commitment to strengthen the system by developing a comprehensive 10-year strategy to seamlessly provide mental health and addiction services to more optimally meet a broad range of individual needs, be it in a hospital setting or the community. During the summit, Caplan released a draft discussion paper called *Every Door is the Right Door* that was developed by the Minister's Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions — a diverse group of consumers, family members, health

care providers and researchers which was set up in 2008.

Summit reaches out to a broad representation

The summit is an example of the ministry working in a more collaborative way, said Anne Bowlby, manager of the Mental Health and Addictions Unit, Health Program Policy and Standards Branch, Health System Strategy. Her unit organized the summit in collaboration with the Minister's Office and Communications and Information Branch. "The ministry is a catalyst, bringing people together to facilitate real change," Bowlby said. "Our stewardship role is to give people opportunities to work together to improve the overall system. This summit was not all about health or government, but what individuals can do and how they can make a difference."

Bowlby said the ministry worked very closely with the province's Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), the Minister's Advisory Group, and key organizations to ensure that the summit included a diverse group of participants.

"People were asked to attend not because of their affiliation but because they had something meaningful to offer," Bowlby said. As part of this process, LHIN partners and other organizations were encouraged to invite participants who had lived experience with mental health illness and addictions, and their family members. "So often

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Guest speaker Shelagh Rogers, a well-known Canadian broadcast journalist and writer, delivers very personal and powerful remarks about her struggles with depression.



Frank O'Dea, co-founder of Second Cup and the day's keynote speaker, talks about how three words — hope, vision and action — helped him to overcome his alcohol addiction.

Access the summit proceedings
Videos of summit speakers and PowerPoint presentations from the breakout sessions are available [here](#).

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you end up with the same people around the table. The ministry was mindful of including new and emerging voices, not only experts with decades of experience in the field.”

Ministries share responsibility

Given the broad and comprehensive nature of the strategy that the ministry is hoping to develop, a collaborative process across the government also had to be encouraged. This led to a summit panel of five ministers including Caplan, discussing the role each of their areas played in acting upon mental health and addictions issues. “It was very important to include other ministries,” Bowlby said. “It was a clear signal that, yes, we’re all involved in this together.” Read highlights from the ministerial panel discussion on page 4.

David Kelly, executive director of the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs and a member of the Minister’s Advisory Group, said there was a real sense that this is the time now to actually change the system. “Past efforts haven’t been inclusive enough. Now we not only have collaboration with consumers and families, but groups across Ontario and the health care sector,” said Kelly.

This process also crosses ministries responsible for schools, social services and criminal justice which all feel the impact of mental health and addictions issues every day, Kelly said. “For example, safe and appropriate housing is one of the key components to support an individual coping with a mental health or addiction challenge.” The bringing together of so many players under one roof during the summit

sends a very strong message, Kelly said. “All this collaboration has provided real hope that the system will change to better focus on the needs of people.”

Sandra Hanmer, CEO of the Waterloo Wellington LHIN, said those who attended the summit from her community were pleased to have participated. “They were really encouraged by the opportunity to contribute their perspectives,” Hanmer said. “I think it’s fabulous to have all the partners together and have the chance to talk and get to solutions. I think it is going to help us end up with a better co-ordinated strategy.”

Personal experiences shared

Betty-Lou Kristy, who has succeeded in overcoming both mental health illness and addiction struggles, joined a number of individuals who shared similar personal journeys with summit participants. Kristy, who is also a member of the Consumer Partnerships group — a component of the Minister’s Advisory Group, said her involvement has shown her that the ministry is indeed interested in listening to community members in order to respond effectively to the challenges of providing mental health and addictions services. “I’m not a token voice around the table. My voice is respected,” Kristy said. “We who lived it can bring very meaningful insight that a health care provider may not be able to.” Read more about Kristy’s experience and her involvement in the Minister’s Advisory Group on page 6.

Kelly said that all the ministry staff’s efforts made a real difference to the success of the day. “You can tell that they worked hard to make sure we had a good open process and that all the various voices were heard. My hat is off to them,” said Kelly. “There is a clear commitment from the government for change. I am hopeful that we can set a course to have a much better health care system for people with mental health illness and addictions.” ■





Kathleen Wynne



Chris Bentley



Margarett Best



Aileen Carroll



Deb Matthews



David Caplan

In their own words

Ministerial panel discussion highlights

Health and Long-Term Care Minister David Caplan was joined by his colleagues from several partner ministries for a panel discussion at the summit. Here is a brief highlight of each minister's comments.

Kathleen Wynne

• Minister of Education

"Schools are in a good place to be that early warning sign. I think that the issue for me is then what happens? Once the early identification is made, what are the next steps? As David [Caplan] said, there are no solutions without ministries working together, without collaboration at the community level and at the provincial level."

Chris Bentley

• Attorney General of Ontario

"We now have a director of mental health services, but that's not enough. We've started a series of round tables bringing experts together from different disciplines, different participants of the justice system, different providers, but that's not enough. We've started to break down the ministerial barriers, but that's not enough. We're going to be setting up a consumer group in the very near future. We can start developing better paths, better results."

Margarett Best,

• Minister of Health Promotion

"It was suggested this morning that as part of any mental health strategy a shared accountability across government ministries for addressing the determinants of health beyond the traditional care system is required. The Ministry of Health Promotion, other government ministries, as well as our partners — many of whom are here today — are collaborating and working together to move us forward in this direction."

Aileen Carroll

• Minister of Culture and Minister Responsible for Seniors

"I look forward to working with this ministerial group on key areas of interest to Ontario seniors, such as how to provide appropriate supports, including affordable and accessible housing to seniors who are aging with pre-existing mental health issues and addictions problems and who may lose important social networks over the course of their lives."

Deb Matthews,

• Minister of Children and Youth Services

"We want to do more to make children's mental health services even better right across the province. That's why this summit is so important. There are so many partners involved in supporting kids with mental health challenges and their families. Having everyone together to learn from one another and figure out the best way to move forward is absolutely essential."

David Caplan

• Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

"Thank you for coming in such incredible numbers, for being candid, for the work we are about to embark on together and for your goodwill and willingness to act in partnership and work with me and my colleagues. We've accomplished a lot today. You shared your ideas. You've truly given genuine feedback. You've shared your expertise and I know we are well on our way to creating a 10-year mental health strategy that will ensure every door can and will be the right door." ■

Having everyone together to learn from one another and figure out the best way to move forward is absolutely essential.

Deb Matthews, Minister of Children and Youth Services

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New organizational structure completed for ministry's eHealth functions

New branch created in Health System Information Management and Investment Division

The ministry is creating an eHealth Liaison Branch and has completed the detailed organizational design for the eHealth functions and staff that are being retained by the ministry.

In early April 2009, the ministry transferred the majority of functions formerly with its eHealth Program to eHealth Ontario. Created in September 2008, eHealth Ontario is a restructured agency that brought together under one banner the development functions from MOHLTC's eHealth Program with the operational infrastructure in the Smart Systems for Health Agency.

After the majority of ministry eHealth functions were transferred to eHealth Ontario, a transition team completed the detailed process and organizational design, to the staff level, for the eHealth functions being retained by the ministry. This work included creating an eHealth Liaison Branch located within Health System Information Management and Investment (HSIMI).

eHealth employees were notified of the new eHealth Liaison Branch's staff-level organizational charts on Sept. 21. On the same day, ministry eHealth employees were notified of the results of the process for matching their current positions

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Detailed scope ehealth Liaison Branch

Accountability

The eHealth Liaison Branch will manage eHealth accountability functions to achieve strategic and operational outcomes. The branch will develop a strong accountability framework through:

- negotiating and monitoring accountability agreements with partners that define roles and responsibilities
- managing financial planning, reporting, and providing fiscal and performance management oversight
- demonstrated commitment to service levels and customer service
- processing for quick response, risk management and mitigation strategies
- demonstrated commitment to ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement
- ensuring adherence to government policies and standards for agencies.

Liaison Function

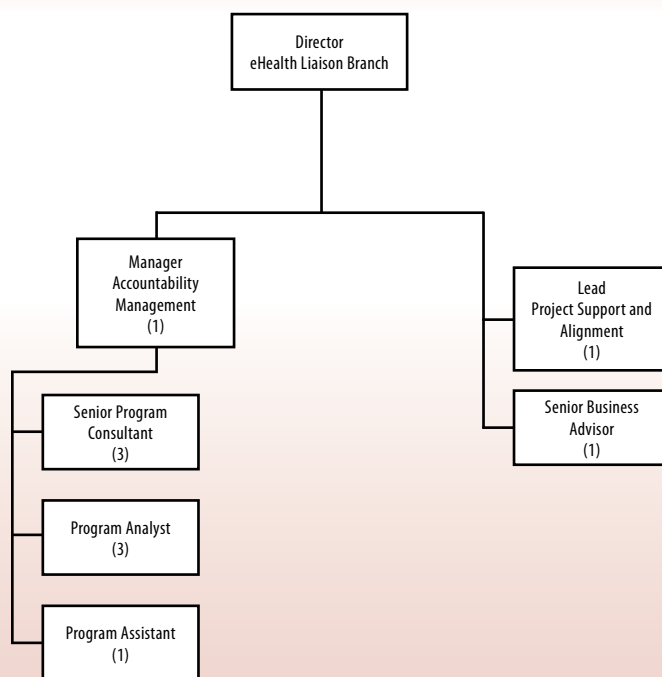
The eHealth Liaison Branch will provide a dedicated liaison function for the ministry and for all partners and stakeholders. The branch will:

- provide program advice to the ministry and other areas of government to inform decision making related to eHealth and to ensure alignment with related government programs and services
- liaise with the ministry to raise awareness of eHealth initiatives and timelines
- have a strong oversight role with dedicated program and financial resources to provide critical analytical functions for expenditures, performance outcomes and program direction
- have strong linkages to other parts of the ministry and central agencies
- manage stakeholder relations and issues management. ■

Health System Information Management and Investment

eHealth Liason Branch Organizational Chart

MANDATE: Manage accountabilities and legislative obligations and enable partners to fulfill their eHealth related mandates. The branch will be a source of information, advice and program knowledge to assist in the facilitation of interactions between internal ministry and external stakeholders in support of the government's eHealth priorities.



Please note: The number of positions captured in the organizational chart is an estimate only and is based on initial planning assumptions about the work which will be undertaken. As a result of the on-going analysis of the business priorities, the number of positions will be reviewed and approved accordingly.

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to positions in the new structure of the eHealth Liaison Branch.

“Launching the eHealth Liaison Branch and completing its detailed organizational structure is an important step in the ministry’s transition to stewardship of the health care system,” said John McKinley, Assistant Deputy Minister, HSIMI. “The eHealth Liaison Branch will provide high quality, strategic advice on eHealth issues and will play a lead role in helping the ministry make evidenced-based

New organizational structure completed for ministry’s eHealth functions

decisions for eHealth. The branch will also work closely with our partners and stakeholders on Ontario’s eHealth objectives.”

Under its mandate, the eHealth Liaison Branch will manage accountabilities and legislative obligations, and will work to enable partners to fulfill their eHealth-related mandates. The branch will help facilitate interactions between internal and external ministry stakeholders in support of the government’s eHealth priorities. ■

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Lived experience speaker welcomed the opportunity to be part of the solution

Betty-Lou Kristy struggled with mental illness and alcohol and drug addiction for many years. Kristy began conquering her battle in her thirties, only to find her young son was struggling with depression, panic attacks and had developed a dependency on alcohol and prescription pain medication. “I tried to find help for him. But he just kept getting sicker and sicker,” Kristy told the summit audience as member of a consumer panel with lived experiences. Kristy explained that it was a challenge to find appropriate youth services as well as get his dual problems of mental illness and addictions addressed. “It was just so frustrating. He was crippled with anxiety and more afraid of living than of dying.” In December 2001 Kristy’s son Pete lost his battle and died of an overdose at the age of 25.

The loss of her son and her own years of struggle inspired Kristy to help others. She has become involved with organizations and outreach programs that support youth with addiction issues. Kristy is also part of the Consumer



The panel of people who shared their lived experiences with mental health illness and addictions gather on the stage following their presentation. In this article, Betty-Lou Kristy (photo inset) shares her story about the challenges in seeking access to integrated treatment and services for her and her son.

Partnerships group — a component of the Minister’s Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions — because she would like to see comprehensive programs put in place that could have helped her and her son at a much earlier stage. “What’s needed are multi-layered, integrated services that can help a family that may be facing a number of mental health and addictions issues. When my son was younger I couldn’t find healthy and affordable housing. It’s hard to focus on getting better if you don’t have safe housing.”

Kristy said she believes that the collaborative work the advisory committee is engaged in, with such a wide cross section of the health care sector and the community, will ultimately result in a mental health system that can better address the needs of families like hers and so many others in Ontario.

Kristy said she was pleased to be involved in the summit because it allowed her to be part of the solution to a problem that affects the lives of so many. “If there is a way to finally move mountains, it is going to be done,” said Kristy. ■

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