



PROVINCIAL HUMAN SERVICES AND JUSTICE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2020

What is the HSJCC Network?

A network of committees established to coordinate resources and services for people with unique needs who have come into contact with the law



Who are the members of the HSJCC Network?

HSJCCs are voluntary collaborations made up of over 1,600 professionals from the human services and justice sectors



What do HSJCCs do?

Operating at a Local, Regional and Provincial level, HSJCCs provide education and training for their members, as well as coordinate care for individuals and work to address systemic issues

The Provincial Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee is pleased to have the opportunity to provide this submission to the Government of Ontario, and the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, to inform the 2020 provincial budget.

Our entire network commends the provincial government for their commitment to promoting mental health. We were pleased that, in 2019, a dedicated Mental Health and Addictions Division was established within the Ministry of Health, with a dedicated Assistant Deputy Minister, and a dedicated Forensics and Justice Unit; as well as a new Corporate Health Care and Wellness Branch established within the Correctional Services Division of the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

The provincial government's investment of 3.8 billion over ten years is unprecedented and provides new opportunities to expand services across the province. **We recommend that \$50 million of the new investment be dedicated specifically to addressing the needs of Ontarians with mental health disabilities, substance use issues, and other human service needs that are involved with the justice system. Our HSJCC Network is requesting a \$500,000 increase to our annualized funding to continue our work to support this population. This request mirrors the provincial investment that was made at the inception of our network over 15 years ago.** A funding increase is crucial to sustain our existing capacity and meet growing demands. As our recent achievements demonstrate, a coordinated, cross-sectoral approach to the issues affecting Ontarians in conflict with the law is an effective and efficient means of reducing criminalization across the province. Our network would be happy to work with government to develop a multi-year investment plan for these funds.

OUR NETWORK

Individuals living with mental health disabilities, substance use issues, and other human service needs face multiple barriers to accessing the social determinants of health, such as housing, employment and education, and are vulnerable to criminalization. Incarceration is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, research indicates that the correctional environment can aggravate pre-existing mental health conditions, impede recovery, and hinder successful transition back into the community. Within the justice system, these individuals are often victimized and face stigma and discrimination due to their illnesses. Yet, the justice system sometimes provides the first point of contact for accessing mental health, substance use and human services that can have a positive impact on the lives of those with mental health disabilities.

Ontario's [Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee \(HSJCC\) Network](#) was established in 1997 in response to a recognized need across the province to coordinate resources and services, and plan more effectively for people who are in conflict with the law. Our priority consideration is for, but not limited to, people with a serious mental illness, developmental disability, acquired brain injury, substance use issues, and/or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. The HSJCCs are a cooperative effort of the Ministries of the Attorney General, Children, Community and Social Services, Health, and the Solicitor General.

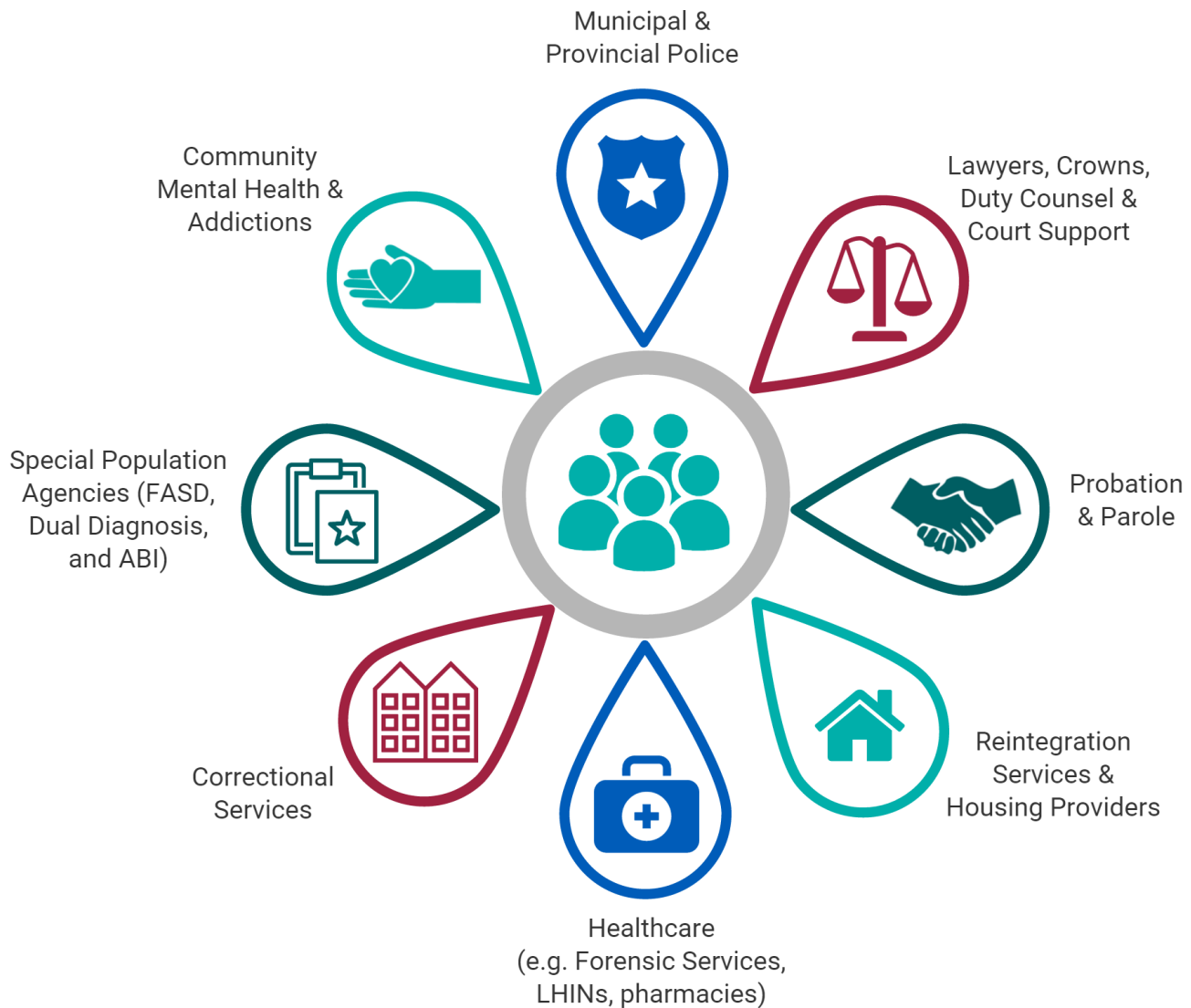
The two primary areas of emphasis for the HSJCCs are:

1. To provide a planning table to bring together service providers to find solutions to the problem of the criminalization of people with defined unique needs, and;
2. To develop a model of shared responsibility and accountability in dealing with this group of individuals at points of intersection with the justice system.

Our network includes 1,600+ members across Ontario. Each HSJCC is a voluntary collaboration between social service organizations, mental health and addictions organizations and partners from the justice sector, including police services, legal aid services, Crown attorneys, correctional and probation officers. There are 14 Regional HSJCCs who work to improve the issues that impact individuals regionally who require human services as they navigate through the criminal justice system. Over 39 Local HSJCCs provide education and training for their members, coordinate care for justice-involved individuals in their communities and provide input to regional committees.

The Provincial HSJCC (PHSJCC) functions as a planning body, supporting the individual and collective efforts of the Local and Regional HSJCCs. The PHSJCC also identifies and addresses provincial service and policy issues, makes recommendations, and identifies system level solutions. Composed of regional members, representatives from the four supporting provincial ministries, and key partners, the PHSJCC is dedicated to education and training, provincial policy projects and system change initiatives.

The PHSJCC is supported by the HSJCC Secretariat which is housed at the Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario. Established in 2015, with funding made available by the Ministry of Health, the Secretariat has supported a considerable expansion of the work of the HSJCC Network by coordinating province-wide projects, providing policy analysis and assisting with work planning, producing annual reports and initiating member engagement activities. The Secretariat also assists with education and knowledge exchange activities, including education webinars, newsletters and informational guides which are all made publicly available on the HSJCC [website](#).



OUR SERVICES

In addition to providing system navigation support, the HSJCC Network provides direct services to Ontarians living with mental health disabilities, substance use issues, and other human service needs who are involved with the justice system. In many regions across the province, we offer a “backpack program,” where individuals that are being released from correctional custody are provided with a backpack full of supplies to help them get started as they transition back to living in the community. The supplies provided include: food items, hygiene products, winter clothing such as hats, scarves and mittens, and gift cards to purchase essential items for daily living. We also operate a transportation program in many areas of the province, providing bus tickets or taxi vouchers to individuals being released from correctional custody. In many rural and northern communities in Ontario, an individual’s home community may be several hours away from the location of the correctional facility; we play a vital role in supporting these vulnerable individuals to return safely and begin reintegrating back into their home community.

The HSJCC Network also supports the operation of therapeutic jurisprudence courts across the province, including mental health courts and drug treatment courts. These specialized courts function most effectively when there is a dedicated Crown attorney, judge, duty counsel, and mental health and addictions court support worker on site during a dedicated sitting time at the courthouse. Our network has historically played an important role in establishing these specialized courts and has been active in coordinating all of these key stakeholders at the courthouse and arranging for a dedicated sitting time. We also provide ongoing clinical, social services and housing support to the individuals who are seen by these specialized courts. Through our Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes, Pine Ridge HSJCC, for example, individuals that graduate from the court program are awarded with a housing scholarship of \$1,000 to help them secure long-term rental housing in the community.

In 2017, the PHSJCC, in partnership with Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario, Legal Aid Ontario and the Ministries of the Attorney General and Health, hosted a provincial forum on mental health courts. Important stakeholders, such as judges, Crowns, duty counsel, mental health court support workers, persons with lived experience, and policy makers, were convened to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing these specialized courts. A final [report](#) was produced resulting from three years of data collection. Through this province-wide project, for the first time in Ontario, government, service providers and service users were able to gain access to valuable information about the number of designated mental health courts across the province, and the similarities and differences in their operations.



MENTAL HEALTH COURTS FORUM—APRIL 24TH, 2017



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

With the leadership of the PHSJCC, supported by the HSJCC Secretariat, our network has been able to markedly increase the scope of our achievements. A key area of our work is the provision of education and knowledge exchange activities for our 1,600+ members. Every two years, we host a three-day provincial [conference](#), bringing together over 400 participants from organizations and communities across Ontario. These educational events are an invaluable opportunity for professionals from the human services and justice sectors to share promising practices, build cross-sector networks, and engage in solutions for the priority populations we serve.

In addition, the PHSJCC facilitates knowledge exchange by hosting monthly province-wide educational webinars and through our newsletters. The [webinars](#) cover a wide range of topics of interest to HSJCC members from across the human services and justice sectors. These webinars are a great resource for the HSJCC Network and are consistently well-attended by our members. The HSJCC [newsletter](#) is released on a bi-monthly basis. The newsletter profiles new research, promising practices, training opportunities, and provides updates on PHSJCC projects, and initiatives of the Local and Regional HSJCCs, partner ministries and stakeholders.

The PHSJCC has also been able to respond quickly to emerging province-wide issues, key concerns and needs identified by our network. We regularly engage our members through surveys, telephone and webinar consultations, and virtual and in-person meetings to determine priorities, which are outlined in our [annual reports](#). Our priorities of focus for [2019-2022](#) include supportive housing for justice-involved clients, release from custody and discharge issues, cross-sector collaboration and cooperation issues, clients with complex needs, emerging substance use issues, specialized populations including seniors and youth, and expansion of resources.

Over the past few years, the issue of older adults and their interactions with the criminal justice system has been increasingly identified as a priority by the HSJCC Network. In response, the PHSJCC has been developing a navigational [guidebook](#) for older adults and adults with age-related conditions who are involved with the justice system. Informed by subject matter experts and persons with lived experience from across our network and beyond, this guidebook is focused on providing supports to care partners and service providers to assist older adults involved in the justice system by promoting appropriate resources and best practices.

PROVINCIAL HSJCC 2019 CONFERENCE

**Colouring Outside the Lines:
Innovations and Creative
Community Responses** was held
in Toronto on November 4-6, 2019.

393 

CONFERENCE DELEGATES

41 

PRESENTATIONS &
WORKSHOPS

171 

ORGANIZATIONS

82 

ONTARIO COMMUNITIES

#HSJCC2019
on Twitter



We made **228,288** impressions
and reached **91,355** users

Similarly, since 2012, the issue of police-hospital transitions for persons experiencing a mental health or addictions-related crisis and their effects on service users and service providers have been a key concern of the HSJCC Network. In response, the PHSJCC led a province-wide [project](#), in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Ontario Hospital Association, to examine issues relating to police-hospital transitions, as well as innovative practices adopted by police services and hospitals. This work culminated in the production of two resources, *Police-Hospital Transitions: A Framework for Ontario and Tools for Developing Police-Hospital Transition Protocols in Ontario*. Together, these resources provide a practical guide for communities across the province to develop more effective and equitable responses to persons experiencing a mental health or addictions-related crisis. In 2019, the Solicitor General and Minister of Health jointly endorsed and recommended the use of the Framework and Toolkit to all hospitals and police services in Ontario.

OUR REQUEST

The HSJCC Network was established in 1997 by the Ministries of the Attorney General, Children, Community and Social Services, Health, and the Solicitor General, through the [Provincial Strategy to Coordinate Human Services and Criminal Justice Systems in Ontario](#). Beginning in the 2004/2005 fiscal year, the Ministry of Health, through its Service Enhancement funding, invested \$50 million into mental health and justice programs across Ontario. From this investment, the total amount dedicated to the HSJCC was \$500,000 in annualized funding for the operations of the entire network. In 2015, we were delighted to receive additional annualized funding, totalling \$225,000, from the Ministry of Health to establish the HSJCC Secretariat.

The Local and Regional HSJCCs have not received any new funding since the inception of our network. Even with the advent of new government-led initiatives such as Situation Tables and Community Safety and Well-Being Plans that require HSJCC support, we did not receive any new dedicated funding. Furthermore, our network has had to rely on the generosity of our partner agencies to meet the growing demands for service; many of our partners have provided in-kind staffing support, made financial donations, and even used funding from their operating budgets to support the important work of the HSJCC Network. In fact, our 1,600+ members do not receive dedicated funding for the work done on behalf of the HSJCC; rather, all of our staff time is provided in-kind through our respective employers.

Our HSJCC Network is requesting a \$500,000 increase to our annualized funding to continue our work to support Ontarians with mental health disabilities, substance use issues, and other human service needs that are involved with the justice system. We also recommend that \$50 million be dedicated specifically to enhancing direct services to this population. This request mirrors the provincial investment that was made at the inception of our network over 15 years ago. A funding increase is crucial to sustain our existing capacity and meet growing demands. There is a particular need for an increase in supportive housing across the province, as well as specialised clinical and support services. As our recent achievements demonstrate, a coordinated, cross-sectoral approach to the issues affecting Ontarians in conflict with the law is an effective and efficient means of reducing criminalization across the province. Our network would be happy to work with government to develop a multi-year investment plan for these funds.

For further discussion on this submission, please contact:

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