

Office of Addictions and Mental Health Human Rights Remedy Reporting

Overview of Actions and Achievements

The Office of Addictions and Mental Health's (OAMH's) work has been focused in the three following areas:

First, the formal healthcare system -- where we are expanding and enhancing the services that exist today and adding new ones.

- Day hospitals
- Recovery Support Centre
- Rural access to urgent care
- Provincial Preschool Autism Services
- Improvements at Central Intake to enable greater access

Second, tapping into the capacity that exists -- in our communities, in the private sector, in our universities and colleges, and virtually.

- Millions in funding to community-based organizations
- Pilot with Dalhousie to open a new Centre for Psychological Health
- Peer Support Line
- Access Wellness
- Tranquility
- Togetherall

And finally, integration – bringing it all together on a strong foundation, making it easier for people to get the care they need from the right provider at the right time.

- Leveraging Provincial Intake as a key component in the design of future Mental Health and Addictions Insured Services.
- Use of a Measurement Based Care program to monitor and measure client outcomes.

OAMH Achievements

Legislative Improvements	
Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act (IPTA)	<p>The Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act was enacted in 2005 to make sure that people who are unable to make treatment decisions due to severe mental illness receive the appropriate treatment. A review of the Act was conducted in 2013, resulting in numerous recommendations, including legislative changes. IPTA was amended to reflect recommendations and enhance the protection of patients treated under IPTA. The act is amended to require that the IPTA be interpreted, read, and applied in a manner that is consistent with Canada's accepted obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</p> <p>The Order in Council for the IPTA Regulations (2024-248 and 2024-249) was signed and proclaimed on June 18, 2024. This proclamation enables amendments the government made to IPTA in 2022. Bill 120 came into effect on August 13, 2024.</p>
Health Services Insurance Act Amendments (HSIA)	<p>In April 2024, the <i>Health Services and Insurance Act</i> (HSIA) was amended to enable the Minister of Addictions and Mental Health to create additional insured services programs for mental health and addictions (MHA) care using newly established service codes.</p>
Mood and Anxiety Program (referenced above)	<p>Nova Scotia is leveraging public-private partnerships to improve access to mental health and addiction services. The first program will support efforts to decrease wait-times for non-urgent care and boost access to mental health services for mood and anxiety disorders by using an integrated approach that leverages the MHA Provincial Intake to match client need to providers contracted to deliver 10 clinical sessions. OAMH is funding this program.</p>
Investment in Post Secondary Sector to Increase MHA Workforce	

Dalhousie Centre for Psychological Health Pilot	Launched in September 2023, OAMH and Dalhousie University have partnered to pilot a community-based clinic model which provides access to identified populations facing the most significant barriers and provide a training environment for PhD students.
MSVU PsyD with child and youth focus	The province has added more training for mental health and addictions professionals at Mount Saint Vincent University. A new doctoral psychology program and training clinic focused on the needs of children – a first of its kind in Canada – is set to begin in the fall of 2026, funded by the Office of Addictions and Mental Health and the Department of Advanced Education.
Improvements to Crisis and Urgent Care	
9-8-8: National Three-Digit MHA Crisis Line	<p>The 9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline is a new three-digit helpline that provides urgent, live support by phone and text for people in Canada who are thinking about suicide or worried about someone else who may be thinking about suicide. It is available in English and French, 24 hours a day and seven days a week, to everyone in Canada.</p> <p>The 9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline is funded by the Government of Canada and delivered by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and their partners including the Nova Scotia Provincial Crisis Line.</p>
Provincial Crisis Line Liaison with 911	To address gaps in access and improve service delivery provided through the Provincial Crisis Line (PCL) to support First Responders in the community. This pilot will ensure MHA crisis calls supported by police and other first responders have access to equitable and consistent MHA clinician support. The pilot is in the planning stages.
Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)	<p>Crisis Intervention teams are partnerships between law enforcement, mental health and addiction professionals, individuals who live with mental illness and/or addiction disorders, their families and other partners to improved community responses to mental health crisis.</p> <p>Basic Goals of CIT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop the most compassionate and effective crisis response system that is the least intrusive in a person's life

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to help persons with mental disorders and/or addictions access medical/mental health treatment rather than place them in the criminal justice system due to illness related behaviours.
NSH Virtual Crisis and Urgent Care Supports	<p>The Crisis/Urgent Care services teams, based out of the Regional Hospitals within Eastern, Northern and Western zones, provide consultations to the Emergency Departments with clients who are presenting with situational and psychiatric crises that are impacting their Mental Health.</p> <p>Eastern, Northern and Western Zones offer virtual crisis assessments, which allow teams to conduct assessments to clients who present to EDs in rural areas or for clients who present in the evenings after on-site coverage ended.</p>
Community Led Crisis Response Model Pilot	<p>Through an RFP process, OAMH has awarded a contract to the POSSE Project to design and pilot a community-based response to mental health, substance use, and addiction crisis. This pilot will serve people in the West Hants area and will be evaluated to inform decisions related to expansion.</p>
Community Investment	
Mental Health and Addictions Community Wellness Grant	<p>OAMH has developed a Mental Health and Addictions Community Wellness Framework which guides both project and long-term funding for community organizations working to improve community mental wellness. In 2024/25, over \$13.7M was awarded.</p> <p>The framework is grounded in the principles of Universal Mental Health and Addictions Care and focuses on eight key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early Childhood Development ○ Education ○ Environment ○ Food and Housing Security ○ Health Services ○ Income and Employment ○ Health/Mental Health Literacy ○ Social and Cultural Inclusion. <p>The framework guides funding under three streams:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MHA Community Wellness Grant: \$4.6M annually. Multi-year grants (up to three years) for community-based organizations to provide support and services that address mild to moderate mental health and addictions. Organizations were able to apply for up to \$250K/year. 2. Project Stream: \$1.75M annually. Grants (one year or less) for up to \$25,000/ grant for projects/events. This is administered through the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia and is focused on mild to moderate impacts of mental health and addiction or health promotion. 3. Research and Innovation Stream: \$300K annually. Grants for time-limited projects that are research and innovation focused.
One-Time Community Grants provided to organizations supporting mental health, addictions, and well-being	<p>OAMH provided one-time grants to different organizations and groups across the province who support various programs, projects, and populations.</p> <p>\$2,152,095.70 in one-time grants was distributed in 2024/25. OAMH also provided the NS Mental Health Foundation with \$1.75M for one-time grants through their ongoing grant programming.</p> <p>One time grant funding has continued into 2025/26 and includes funding organizations who support the disability community. Two grants awarded included CBOs that support the disability community, Independent Living Nova Scotia and Summer Street Industries Societies.</p>
Breton Ability Centre: Access to Community Psychiatry	<p>Since 2023/24, OAMH and DHW have been providing funding to support Breton Ability Centre residents' access to community psychiatry.</p>
Expanding Access to Services	
Access Wellness Nova Scotia: Supportive Counselling Services	<p>One-on-one, supportive single session counselling to help people with general mental health concerns, including anxiety, job loss, grief, relationship issues and substance use.</p> <p>Counselling sessions can be done by phone, online or in person in Sydney, Halifax, Kentville and New Glasgow.</p>

	<p>These single session appointments are open to all Nova Scotians over the age of 18, including people with private healthcare coverage.</p> <p>TELUS Health has been contracted to deliver the service, which is administered by Nova Scotia Health.</p>
Mental Health Day Hospital	There are 4 mental health day hospitals, 1 in each zone. Day Hospitals offers intensive mental health treatment during the day. People attending during the day and return home in the evening.
RASP and community psychiatry access model	<p>A new service, the Rapid Assessment and Stabilization Program was initiated by NSH in central zone. This service is located at the Abbie J Lane Hospital. The primary purpose is to improve access to through standardized pathways to psychiatry consultations. Patients are connected to this pathway through MHA intake after referral from a primary care provider (PCP) when certain criteria are met.</p> <p>Building on the learning from this service, RASP will be expanded across the province.</p>
Promote Collaborative Mental Healthcare between psychiatry and primary care (Northern Zone)	<p>Mental Health conditions are common in neurodiverse people, but such conditions are commonly mis-diagnosed and sub-optimally addressed by primary care providers due to complexity of presentation, communication barriers, and limited access to timely focused psychiatric care. As such, neurodiverse people who have mental health conditions often suffer from excess mental distress and symptom mismanagement which negatively impacts their quality of life and meaningful engagement in the labor force and broader community. Further, suboptimal therapy may necessitate otherwise unneeded community support or negatively impactful therapies. DHW has continued funding this trial, focused initially within Northern Zone, that seeks to address the complexities associated with diagnosing and treating mental health conditions in this population by fostering structured collaboration between psychiatry and primary care providers.</p> <p>DHW and OAMH will work with partners to explore opportunities for expansion.</p>
Recovery Support Centres	12 Recovery support centres being set up across the province by NSH. All offer full or partial services. Centres are low barrier with access to same day services. RSC provide in-

	person assessments, outpatient withdrawal management, and recovery support programming, including one-on-one and group support.
Peer Support Phone Service	<p>The provincial peer support line opened to Nova Scotians on Wednesday, October 12, 2022. No referral is required. All peer supporters are in the province.</p> <p>Trained peer supporters provide social and emotional support, reassurance, and encouragement to people who are feeling isolated, alone or anxious. Peer supporters can also provide information about more formal services and supports that might help. Mental Health Innovations (MHI) has been contracted to deliver the service. Nova Scotia Health administers the contract with MHI.</p>
MHA Central Intake Investments	Investments in staffing and service delivery model revision to support the delivery of intake services within community settings; expanding access points and improve collaboration with community partners. Furthermore, expanding hours of operation to improve responsiveness.
Discharge Hub Planning	Multi-partner effort to engage the health and community service systems in finding solutions to address the discharge planning needs of mental health clients in acute care.
Provincial Pre-School Autism Services (PPAS)	A new model of care and expand pre-school autism services. Services will include access to appropriate interventions, a single point of access to supports, central waitlist for diagnosis, and province wide access to the QuickStart program.
Autism Nova Scotia: Pinwheel	OAMH funds several programs delivered by ANS including the Pinwheel Wellness Center. Pinwheel Wellness Centre (PWC) provides in-person, online and telephone services to Autistic adults across NS who are experiencing mild-to-moderate mental health distress through counselling, occupational therapy and social work services.
Brief Intervention Outreach Services (BIOS)	<p>BIOS is operated through the IWK which helps health care providers and families of autistic individuals under the age of 19 to manage emergency behavioral crisis situations.</p> <p>Goals of BIOS include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support school aged children with autism, their families, and care providers in handling emergency behavioural situations that often include extreme violent behaviour towards self and others. • To empower families and care providers by teaching the skills, tools and supports they need to respond to challenging behaviours.
Family Intensive Outreach Services (FIOS)	<p>FIOS work is guided by the Ecosystemic Structural Family Therapy (ESFT) model to support children/youth and families experiencing behavioral or relationship challenges. FIOS is offered through the IWK and takes a trauma-informed, strengths-based approach to understand a family's relationships and work toward the family's goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing family interactions supports changes in individual behaviors. • FIOS will help caregivers develop a better understanding of child/youths' challenges. <p>FIOS works with community partners to help families access services and supports available.</p>
Adaptive Mentalization Based Integrative Treatment (AMBIT)	<p>AMBIT is a team-based approach that helps staff who work with young people who have complex needs by using mentalization - the skill of working to understand what we and others may be thinking and feeling. The process of supporting staff supports the young person's experience of help-seeking and building relationships. It is typically used in an outreach approach and with high-needs youth.</p>