

THE STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN CANADA 2024

Mapping the Landscape of **Mental Health, Addictions
and Substance Use Health**



What is **The State of Mental Health in Canada 2024**?

Through a first-of-its-kind report, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is providing a picture of the mental health system—with all its cracks and failings—and how people are faring across the country.

The State of Mental Health in Canada 2024 is an in-depth accounting of the choices governments have made, and the grim realities facing our population when it comes to mental health and substance use health.

Mental health has been profoundly neglected under universal health care since Medicare was created forty years ago. Six federal governments in a row have failed to make it right, and Canadians are living with—and sometimes dying from—the consequences.

What **The State of Mental Health in Canada 2024** finds:

- The mental health of Canadians is three times worse than before the pandemic, and millions of people can't get the care they need. Suicides, particularly in the north, and the toxic drug supply are claiming lives at an alarming rate.
- No province or territory is spending enough on mental health, in part because they're not obliged to. On average, provinces and territories are only spending 6.3% of their overall health budgets on mental health. They should be spending 12%.
- People receive drastically different care depending on their home province or territory and are doing worse in some places, including in the north and rural areas.
- Shortages of psychiatrists and other mental health care providers mean people aren't getting care when and where they need it.
- It's not a flashy topic, but we need more data about mental health! You can't fix what you don't measure, and Canada is failing to collect information about the mental health system and the ways it affects us.

CMHA has also identified **pockets of innovation** that have surfaced and could be expanded across the country, including:

- Free, universal mental health care promised in Nova Scotia
- Mobile crisis responses led by civilians rather than police
- Inuit paraprofessionals trained to provide care
- Rapid-access mental health services
- Wellness hubs that bring together health and social services for youth and rural populations.

The CMHA report also offers decision-makers **a roadmap for fixing the mental health system** so that it best supports the mental health of people in Canada, recommending that the Government of Canada:

- Invest 12% of health care spending in mental health, addictions and substance use (MHASU) health care.
- Write mental health care into federal law to guarantee funding for mental health.
- Eliminate poverty, which leads to poor mental health, and ensure that people with mental health disabilities have livable incomes and adequate housing
- Collect more and better data to improve the mental health care system and the mental health of Canadians.

Want to learn more?

cmha.ca/somh