



BUILDING A HEALTHIER AND MORE PROSPEROUS CANADA: INVESTING IN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE HEALTH CARE POLICIES

With an unprecedented federal election on April 28, 2025, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) calls on all political parties to recognize the importance of investing in mental health and substance use health care policies that will build a healthier and more prosperous Canada.



Knowing that there can be no health without mental health and substance use health, there is a clear opportunity for the federal government to play a critical leadership role that is collaborative with the provinces and territories, and supportive of the people of Canada to ensure that they get the care they need, when they need it.

Understanding that timely access to mental health and substance use health care is very much on the minds of Canadians, CAMIMH strongly believes that it must be reflected in the priorities of any future federal government.

As the people of Canada consider their electoral choices and who they want to lead this country, CAMIMH has identified **four policy areas** where there is a clear role for the federal government to make a difference in improving our mental health and substance use health, and our overall quality of life, they are:

1. **Improving and expanding access to mental health and substance use health services**
2. **Developing clear and meaningful mental health and substance use health system performance indicators**
3. **Increasing investments in mental health and substance use health research**
4. **Reinstating a Minister of Mental Health and Addictions in Cabinet**

1 IMPROVING AND EXPANDING ACCESS TO SERVICES RELATED TO MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE HEALTH SERVICES

Recommendation: That the federal government pass a companion piece of legislation to the Canada Health Act called the Mental Health and Substance Use Health Care For All Parity Act – which equally values mental health and substance use health with physical health.

2 DEVELOPING CLEAR AND MEANINGFUL MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE HEALTH SYSTEM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Recommendation: That the federal government provides the necessary resources to the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) to collaborate with provinces and territories, as well as other stakeholders to develop: (a) comprehensive mental health and substance use health system performance indicators, and (b) evidence-based national benchmarks and targets for each indicator.

3 INCREASING INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE HEALTH

Recommendation: That the federal government ensure that the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) increase its resources to fund mental health and substance use health research.

4 REINSTATING A MINISTER OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS IN CABINET

Recommendation: That the federal government reinstates a Minister of Mental Health and Addictions in Cabinet to lead the government's priorities focused on mental health and substance use health.

To learn more about CAMIMH's vision, mission and policy-relevant reports, please go to:

- Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health | Mental Health Research Canada (January 2025). **3rd Annual Federal-Provincial Mental Health & Substance Use Health Report Card.**
Link: <https://www.camimh.ca/briefs-to-government-reports>
- Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (December 2024). **Take the Money and Run? How Accountable are the Provinces and Territories in Spending Federal Funding on Mental Health & Substance Use Health Care? A Review of 2023 and 2017 B-Lateral Funding Agreements for Mental Health and Substance Use Health Services, 2023/24-2025/26**
Link: <https://www.camimh.ca/briefs-to-government-reports>
- Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (June 2021). **From Out of the Shadows and Into the light... Achieving Parity in Access to Care Among Mental Health, Substance Use and Physical Health.**
Link: <https://www.camimh.ca/briefs-to-government-reports>

ABOUT CAMIMH:

Established in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is a member-driven alliance of 14 national mental health organizations comprised of healthcare providers and organizations representing persons with lived and living experience, their families and caregivers. CAMIMH's mandate is to ensure that mental health and substance use health is placed on the national agenda so that the people of Canada receive timely and appropriate access to care and support. For more information on our work, please visit our website at www.CAMIMH.ca.

For more information on the recommendations presented in this document and additional resources, please contact our team:

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