

Take the Money & Run? Provinces & Territories Must be More Accountable Using Federal Funding for Mental Health & Substance Use Health Care Services

OTTAWA, December 18, 2024 — Given the long history of the provinces and territories demanding maximum cash for health care from the federal government with minimum accountability, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) has released a report – *Take the Money and Run? How Accountable are the Provinces and Territories in Spending Federal Funding on Mental Health & Substance Use Health Care Services* – that reviews the 2023 federal-provincial-territorial bi-lateral health agreements with a specific focus on mental health and substance use health. The report found:

- Of the \$25 billion that has been provided by the federal government to the provinces and territories as part of the 2023 10-year health accord, on average, only **15.9%** is invested in mental health and substance use health care services, with median funding standing at 8.45%.
- Three provinces, PEI, Manitoba and British Columbia, have invested **\$0** federal dollars in mental health and substance use health care, and 7 of the provinces and territories are allocating 10% or less.

“While the provinces and territories have taken the money, many of them are not investing these resources to improve timely access to mental health and substance use health care services,” said Florence Budden, CAMIMH Co-Chair. “This lack of investment will continue to limit the ability of Canadians to access care where and when they need it. There can be no health without mental health.”

The report also reviewed the three common mental health and substance use health indicators, including benchmarks and targets, that the provinces and territories will use to measure progress and report out to the public. It found:

- Depending on the indicator, some provinces and territories have not listed a benchmark or target.
- Often, for those provinces and territories who have listed a benchmark they have identified a modest target.
- We are not aware of any discussion and/or consensus amongst the federal, provincial and territorial governments that there should be a series of national or common targets that are evidence-based.
- It will be important to see if each province and territory provides the data that is not listed, and if they meet their targets.

“The work being undertaken by the federal, provincial and territorial governments is extremely important and valuable and should be applauded, but by no means is it complete, said Anthony Esposti,” CAMIMH Co-Chair. “While there has been an improvement in the identification of some mental health and substance use health indicators to measure progress, not all provinces and territories have provided benchmark and/or target information, nor are they proposing bold enough targets.”

CAMIMH MEMBERS

- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists
- Canadian Association of Social Workers
- Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention
- Canadian Consortium for Early Intervention in Psychosis
- Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association
- Canadian Federation of Mental Health Nurses
- Canadian Medical Association
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Canadian Perinatal Mental Health Collaborative
- Canadian Psychiatric Association
- Canadian Psychological Association
- Community Addictions Peer Support Association
- Medical Psychotherapy Association of Canada
- National Initiative for Eating Disorders
- National Network for Mental Health
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation Canada
- Schizophrenia Society of Canada
- The College of Family Physicians Canada

In the view of CAMIMH, there is much more work to be done when it comes to measuring system performance and reporting to the people of Canada. Moving forward, the Alliance has identified four areas where more must be done by all levels of government:

1. Develop a comprehensive set of mental health and substance use health system performance indicators.
2. Establish evidence-based national targets for each of the mental health and substance use health indicators.
3. Effectively communicate mental health and substance use health system performance to Canadians through a *National Mental Health and Substance Use Health Dashboard*.
4. Ensure that the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) has the long-term funding to fulfill its mandate.

Complementing these measures, CAMIMH continues to call on the federal government to introduce a companion piece of legislation to the *Canada Health Act – A Mental Health and Substance Use Health Care For All Parity Act* – which would include sustainable funding to improve and expand access to publicly-funded mental health care providers.

Knowing that you cannot manage what you do not measure, CAMIMH stands ready to work with all levels of government, and others, to improve timely access to accessible and inclusive mental health and substance use health care services.

- 30 -

About CAMIMH

Established in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is a member-driven alliance of 18 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.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Barbara Barrett, Impact Public Affairs
343.998.8906
barbara@impactcanada.com