



**Children's Mental Health Ontario**  
**Santé mentale pour enfants Ontario**

**2008-09 Report to Members by the Board President and Executive Director/CEO**

In a year of many new initiatives and challenges, approval of CMHO's **new mission, vision, values and three-year strategic plan** were key highlights. After extensive consultation with members, we clarified CMHO's dual role as *both* strengthening Ontario's child and youth mental health agencies *and* enhancing the system of mental health services for children, youth and their families. Our new mission – **"we champion the right of every child and youth in Ontario to mental health and well-being"** – places the province's young people at its centre and asserts their rights, not only their needs. Until 2012, our work to achieve that mission will be focussed on 4 strategic objectives:

1. Strengthening the financial and operating capacity of member agencies.
2. Building awareness and understanding of child and youth mental health.
3. Improving services and outcomes for children and youth with mental health needs.
4. Expanding Children's Mental Health Ontario's financial and organizational capacity.

Other key highlights from the past year include:

Advocacy & Policy

- We had face-to-face **meetings with more than 30 Members of the Ontario Legislature**, approximately 1/3 of all MPPs. Several of these meetings were organized jointly with Parents for Children's Mental Health.
- We supported the establishment of an **all-party Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions**, and were among the first witnesses invited to present to the committee.
- **Our local advocacy efforts were re-organized** to improve both communication across the province and collaboration within communities by establishing a network of 17 'satellite' groupings of agencies.

- We supported 4 member agencies through a rigorous **review by the Office of the Auditor-General of Ontario**, and joined them at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts where MPPs focussed on the Auditor's findings re the overall shortage of child and youth mental health services, absence of a legislated mandate for services, and inadequacy of data and province-wide standards.
- In numerous meeting with Ministry of Children and Youth Services officials and others at Queen's Park, CMHO advocated for **annual funding increases** that at least match cost increases, faster **implementation of the policy framework** 'A Shared Responsibility', increased **investment in service capacity, organizational infrastructure, and implementation of evidence-based practices**, and the **removal of inter-ministerial barriers** to collaboration among community-based, school-based and hospital-based service providers. We also proposed that **accreditation be considered a mandatory requirement for government funding** of child and youth mental health treatment services.
- At year-end, discussions began with several potential allies, including teacher federations, OPSEU and CUPE-Ontario, Parents for Children's Mental Health, The New Mentality, the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health about forming **an advocacy coalition** to ensure child and youth mental health issues are prominent in the 2011 Ontario election campaign.

#### Year-round Professional Development

- We began to replace the once-a-year clinical workshops at CMHO's annual conference with more accessible and on-going communities of practice that enable knowledge exchange through web-based discussion forums, webinars, teleconferences and other technologies. By yearend, **seven communities of practice** were operating: evidence-based practice implementation, home-based services, dialectical behavioural therapy, reducing restraints, protection of privacy, youth engagement, and accreditation.

#### Accreditation

- Our **new program standards** came into effect in October 2008, and **14 site reviews** were completed by yearend.
- New **standards re youth engagement** were developed in collaboration with The New Mentality.
- Many **paper-based accreditation materials and processes were transitioned to online resources** including the entire accreditation program manual, self-study tools, pre-site review documentation and forms, and site reviewer materials.
- **French translation** of all core accreditation documentation was completed.
- We entered into a formal collaboration agreement with 5 other accrediting bodies to create a **new third-party entity to accredit a broad range of community-based health and social service**

**agencies.** In June the Ontario Trillium Foundation confirmed funding of almost \$500,000 to support a three-year process to develop and launch the new joint enterprise.

#### Children's Mental Health Week & Public Awareness

- With generous *pro bono* assistance from bright red communications inc., we developed new **brochures and posters** in English and French, and secured **transit shelter advertisements** in Windsor, London, Hamilton and the GTA (reaching 417,000 commuters each day); a full-page advertisement in *Canadian Family* magazine (863,000 readers); and **public service announcements** on Global TV. Toronto agencies also collaborated to purchase 2 **advertisements** in the Toronto Star (reaching more than 1.2 million readers).
- **Extensive coverage to raise awareness and reduce stigma** appeared during the first week of May in many media including CBC radio, CITY-TV, the Ottawa Citizen, Hamilton Spectator, Toronto Star, St. Catharines Standard, Niagara Falls Review, Sarnia Observer, Lindsay Post, and numerous community newspapers and radio stations.
- **Lobby Day** activities at Queen's Park included individual meetings with 4 Cabinet Ministers, and 8 other MPPs. Children and Youth Services Minister Deb Matthews and Progressive Conservative member Julia Munro both spoke in the Legislature, and NDP Leader Andrea Horwath received unanimous consent for all MPPs to wear green ribbons in the House.
- Many **towns and cities proclaimed May 2-9 as Children's Mental Health Week**, including Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury.
- **Many public events** were organized throughout the province, including a well-attended forum at the Spectator Auditorium in Hamilton, a conference at Lakehead University, and a luncheon sponsored jointly by the Canadian Club and Empire Club of Canada featuring Margaret Trudeau in conversation with broadcaster Valerie Pringle about their personal and family experiences with child and youth mental health.
- More than **100,000 brochures, 11,000 posters, 2,000 buttons, 5,500 car magnets, 9,000 pencils, 5,500 green ribbons and 5,000 jelly band bracelets** were distributed through multiple channels including member agencies, affiliates of the Ontario Teachers' Federation, public libraries, and public health units.
- Member **agencies organized more than 62 events** in their communities and local schools.
- **Throughout the year, more than 100,000 people visited CMHO's website**, or an average of 285 per day. Our website traffic peaked during Children's Mental Health Week to almost 500 visitors per day.

## Youth Engagement

- **The New Mentality**, CMHO's youth engagement partnership with the Provincial Centre of Excellence at CHEO, transitioned from a pilot project to a program after rigorous evaluation showed its effectiveness in engaging youth to raise awareness and combat stigma, and that agency staff are energized by the presence of a New Mentality group.
- **Training in youth engagement** began to be offered through a partnership with East Metro Youth Services, New Mentality youth were frequent **speakers** at provincial and national events, and **New Mentality groups** were established at Central Toronto Youth Services, Reach Out Centre for Kids (ROCK), New Path Youth and Family Services, Pathways for Children and Youth, Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth, and at CMHO itself (our new Youth Action Committee).

## Brief Child and Family Phone Interview

- Under contract to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, we continued to **train and support intake workers** at 120 sites throughout the province, to **collect and analyse data** about the demographics and presenting conditions of children and youth seeking services, and to **monitor wait times** by agency, region and province-wide.
- Innovations in 2008-09 included the development of quarterly **reports in French**, analysis of **trend data** collected since April 2004, and the creation of **new templates** to help agency analyse their aggregate client data.

## Member Communications, Services and Events

- Our bi-weekly e-newsletter for members, **Fast Reports**, was **re-designed and expanded** to provide more and easier-to-access information about developments at CMHO, at Queen's Park, and in member agencies.
- **More frequent communications from CMHO's Executive Director** were sent directly to members, including his bi-monthly reports to the CMHO Board.
- **A survey to gauge members' satisfaction with current services and potential interest in additional services** generated a 58% response rate, and is being used to inform the work of CMHO's Member Services Committee.
- 340 registrants, including 20 youth and 5 parents, attended our **annual conference** on November 20-21, 2008. The program included 6 plenary presentations, as well as 22 workshops in 4 streams (Governance, Management, Clinical and Youth) and a roundtable for agency leaders.

*Glen Newby*  
President, Board of Directors

*Gordon Floyd*  
Executive Director & CEO