

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 – 2020

1. Introduction

Unprecedented growth in demand for child and youth mental health services in the past six years is creating a crisis in Eastern Ontario that cannot go unanswered. What was once thought of as a surge has become the new normal, and we must adapt to the increasing challenge.

The dramatic and sustained increase in demand has included all areas – emergency, inpatient, outpatient and community services – and has stretched our mental health system to the limit. CHEO and The Royal have done their best to react to these pressures, but a new vision is required to guide our services into the future.

That's why this five-year Strategic Plan for 2015 to 2020 has been developed. This is the first plan for guiding CHEO and The Royal's shared mental health services since 2000. It will provide the framework to adapt to the changed environment of child and youth mental health, to meet demands in innovative and collaborative ways, and to provide high quality, timely, evidence-based and effective mental health care.

For the past 15 years, CHEO and The Royal have worked together in partnership to provide specialized psychiatric and mental health services for the region's children and youth. We decided to rename our shared services the **Young Minds Partnership**, to reflect what we strive to provide our community: **Expert Care and Research for Healthy Young Minds**.

2. Executive Summary

"It's time for a bold change." – CHEO & The Royal staff

The process to develop the Strategic Plan for CHEO and The Royal's shared services was highly collaborative, collecting input from 800 staff, physicians, community providers, children, youth and families. The message was clear – they want us to do better to:

- Improve access
- Reduce wait times
- Provide more effective and timely treatment
- Address key gaps in service
- Collaborate with community partners
- Create a strong system of mental health services for children, youth and families

And that's what this plan is intended to do. It is designed to meet the needs of the community while striving to do better with each step forward, keeping patients and family at the centre of all we do. The plan has four key goals:

- Quality Patient Care and Experience
- Community Partnerships
- Outcomes, Accountability, Research
- Staff, Physician and Trainee Engagement

Each goal integrates key strategies and actions for implementation. Over the next five years, we will be monitoring and measuring the impact of the changes we make as well as sharing an annual report card with children, youth, families, organizations and the community.

3. What We're Facing

"We are seeing unprecedented demand." CHEO & The Royal staff

- 75% increase in mental health Emergency visits at CHEO from 2010 to 2015
- 1,000 children and youth waiting for outpatient mental health services at CHEO
- Similar pressures for children and youth at The Royal, with significant increases in inpatient occupancies and referrals as well as increases in acuity of youth accessing services, especially youth with psychosis symptoms
- The primary way that children and youth are admitted to inpatient beds is through the Emergency Room (when they are in crisis)
- Services for children under the age of 12 continue to shrink
- Services for children up to five years of age are not sufficient to meet the need
- Difficulties transitioning youth to adult services

4. Responding to the Challenge

"Give me more impactful care." – youth

In Ontario, one in five under the age of 19 struggles with mental health issues. Research has proven that early intervention is critical to improving the health of children, youth and families coping with mental health issues. But with growing demand for services straining the limits of resources in the region, extensive wait lists still exist in spite of significant changes to address the issues made by both CHEO and The Royal.

The decision to develop a new Strategic Plan resulted from an external review of the Child and Youth Specialized Psychiatric Mental Health Services (CY-SPMHS) at CHEO and The Royal, done in November 2013. Circumstances had changed dramatically since the last plan in 2000, resulting in frustrations by children, youth and families in accessing timely service across our programs. As well, our partners wanted improved communications, collaboration and enhanced capacity in the community to reduce reliance on hospital services. Staff, physicians and students also wanted to feel more engaged and supported in their roles.

These pressures demonstrate the time for change is now. Our organizations have been in a reactive mode trying to deal with the new reality – it is now time to take a step back, and look forward to develop a new plan to transform our services. This plan will improve access, decrease wait times, address key gaps in services, and in collaboration with our partners, create a strong continuum of mental health services for children, youth and families.

“Let’s work together in a smarter and more proactive way” – community partner

5. How We Developed the Plan

From October 2014 to March 2015, CHEO and The Royal worked together to develop the new five-year Strategic Plan. Their review was driven by these key questions:

- What has changed since our last plan in 2000?
- What impact have these changes had on CHEO and The Royal’s programs?
- What gaps or problems exist and why?
- How do we address these gaps and problems?
- What specific changes are needed?
- What innovative and evidence-based strategies can guide us going forward?

6. Strategic Plan Process

October - November 2014

- Project leadership team with terms of reference and accountability established
- CHEO and The Royal senior leadership approve A3 project charter which details project goals, timelines, scope, activities and deliverables
- Community Partners Advisory Committee established with key community stakeholders to provide guidance and advice
- Comprehensive community consultation plan created. List of internal and external stakeholders developed including: patients and families; staff and physicians at CHEO and The Royal; medical and non-medical community providers; agencies; and funders
- Methods of data collection defined – focus groups, roundtable consultations, surveys and individual interviews
- Surveys conducted of youth and families with the survey developed in consultation with CHEO’s Youth Net – Youth Advisory Council. Surveys were widely distributed through organization websites and social media, as well as through community providers.

November 2014 – February 2015

- 46 focus groups and roundtable discussions conducted with 585 participants who were asked to reflect on:
 - What do CHEO Mental Health and The Royal Youth Program do well?

- Where are current and future opportunities for improvement?
- What would you like to see in the Strategic Plan that would improve mental health services for children, youth and families?
- 200 responses received from youth and parent surveys
- Individual interviews with families and primary care providers
- More than 800 individuals contributed data during this research stage
- Reviews of evaluative research related to mental health and other mental health programs in Canada were conducted online to help determine best strategies for improvement.

March – June 2015

- Collected data analyzed and detailed summary of themes compiled, including key themes from the youth and parent surveys
- Summary presented and discussed with: Alex Munter, CEO of CHEO; George Weber, CEO of The Royal; Vice Presidents, the Young Minds Partnership Management Team; and the Community Partners Advisory Committee
- Themes were consolidated and integrated with the literature and all information reviewed to produce the Strategic Plan
- Draft Strategic Plan shared with staff and physicians from CHEO and The Royal as well as MCYS lead agencies and community partners
- Feedback was integrated to produce the final plan.

7. Strategic Plan Goals, Strategies and Actions

GOAL 1: Quality Patient Care and Experience

Timely access to high-quality care with children, youth, and families engaged as partners

Strategy 1: Improve Access and Patient Flow

Youth, families and service providers shared their concerns with the long wait times to access outpatient services. They would like a better balance between assessment and treatment.

Action	
1	Implement the best model for increasing access and efficiency of care. Pilot in 2015-2016 Choice and Partnership Approach (CAPA) at The Royal Youth Outpatient Services and CHEO's Outpatient Service
2	Identify and implement best practices and psycho-educational interventions for children, youth and families waiting for access to specialized services
3	Collaborate with the Child and Youth Mental Health lead agencies in the development of clinical pathways and determine how the Young Minds Partnership fits into those pathways, ensuring that we respond to the needs of underserved populations

Strategy 2: Engage Children, Youth and Families in their Care

Youth and families want to have a stronger voice in their care and become partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of services and supports.

Action	
1	Identify and establish processes / framework that promotes exceptional child, youth and family experience with CHEO and The Royal's services
2	Actively collaborate with children, youth, families and caregivers in the planning and design of system improvements and the implementation of the Strategic Plan
3	Build strong relationships with family-led groups to actively support families and caregivers
4	Help parents and caregivers navigate adult mental health and addictions services to foster the health of the full family

Strategy 3: Improve Care of Child and Youth Psychiatric Emergencies

Better coordination across the region and across organizations is required to develop an integrated pathway of services for children, youth and families in mental health crises, including CHEO, The Royal, regional hospitals, police and crisis services. Our emergency response to children and youth with substance use disorders, mental health problems and/or concurrent disorders must also be improved.

Action	
1	Develop a new evidence-based model for the assessment and treatment of children and youth psychiatric emergencies, which may include 48-hour crisis stabilization beds, self-harm clinic, urgent care clinic and innovative use of telemedicine to reach community hospital emergency departments
2	Actively collaborate with MCYS lead agencies, other LHIN hospital emergency departments, police, education partners and the CHEO Emergency Department to create regional care pathways for children, youth, and families in mental health crisis. Pilot project for innovative use of the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) with Cornwall Community Hospital ED in 2015-2016
3	In 2015-16, develop and implement strategies to identify and treat youth with substance use disorders, mental health problems and/or concurrent disorders in psychiatric and medical emergencies

Strategy 4: Address Identified Service Gaps

Gaps in service delivery were consistently identified throughout our consultations, including: lack of services for early childhood; children and youth with substance use disorders; mental health problems and/or concurrent disorders; homeless youth; and those in juvenile justice.

Youth, families and providers also identified clinical areas to be strengthened such as services for severe mental illness and trauma, as well as for children and youth in the child welfare system.

In collaboration with MCYS lead agencies and community providers, we will:

Action	
1	Develop best practice interventions for children 0-5 years of age with severe mental health problems, and their families
2	Re-establish dedicated children's beds in the CHEO inpatient service in 2015-2016.
3	Prioritize needs and develop evidence-based treatments and services across the Young Minds Partnership for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and youth with substance use disorders, mental health problems and/or concurrent disorders, and work towards becoming a concurrent disorder capable workforce • Homeless youth • Youth in juvenile justice
4	Implement innovations across the Young Minds Partnership in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treating severe mental illness in children and youth • Children and youth with trauma related disorders • Children and youth within the child welfare system • Children and youth with dual diagnosis • Children and youth with eating disorders

Strategy 5: Make Services Culturally Safe

The Young Minds Partnership requires a proactive strategy to effectively collaborate with diverse communities and at risk populations. We need to ensure access to a full range of high-quality services, treatments and supports for all children and youth, regardless of their origin, background, experience or circumstances.

Action	
1	Collaborate with representatives from priority populations including Francophone, Inuit, First Nations, Ethno-cultural and LGBTQ to create a plan to ensure staff are culturally competent, and care is culturally relevant and safe
2	Ensure care is trauma-informed across services
3	Develop proactive outreach strategy to reach children and youth from at risk populations

Strategy 6: Use Technology More Effectively

Opportunities exist to enhance and expand the use of technology to improve access and outreach, as well as to integrate novel approaches to care, treatments, continuing care and communication.

Action	
1	Expand use of technology, e.g. OTN, etechnology, to improve clinical care across CHEO and The Royal's services
2	Expand use of technology to reach children and youth across our full catchment area, including rural communities

GOAL 2: Community Partnerships

Enhance networks with community providers and physicians for collaboration and increasing capacity

Strategy 1: Build Strong Cross-Sector Relationships with Community Providers

The Young Minds Partnership must strengthen relationships with partners across MCYS, Health, Education, Youth Justice and Child Welfare sectors. This is the optimal time for redefining relationships, refining protocols and collaboratively creating pathways.

Action	
1	Active participation with MCYS lead agencies in the development of Community Mental Health Plans
2	Enhance and continue to support targeted prevention activities
3	Enhance shared care models between our services and community physicians
4	Enhance shared care models between our services and community providers
5	Develop communities of practice around treatment modalities and related research

Strategy 2: Build Capacity Through Education, Knowledge Exchange and Consultation

Community providers play a critical role in identifying the early signs and symptoms of mental health problems in children and youth. The Young Minds Partnership needs to strengthen this link through the exchange of expertise on each side.

Action	
1	Co-develop a <i>Knowledge to Action Plan</i> to enhance the skills and knowledge of community providers
2	Implement best practice educational methods to share expertise with community providers

Strategy 3: *Improve Care Transitions*

The Young Minds Partnership must strengthen transition planning at critical points in the continuum of care.

Action	
1	Active involvement by the Young Minds Partnership in the development of Community Mental Health Plans
2	Within CHEO and The Royal's services, make our transitions more child, youth and family friendly and effective
3	Enhance effectiveness of care transitions through collaboration with community providers
4	Expand capacity to transition older youth with severe psychiatric illness to adult services

Strategy 4: *Strengthened Communication*

The Young Minds Partnership needs to more effectively communicate both within our programs and with our community.

Action	
1	Use town halls, World Cafes and other innovative communication methods to engage all stakeholders, and attend similar sessions held by community providers
2	Develop the Young Minds Partnership scorecard to formally report on Strategic Plan progress
3	Co-develop <i>Knowledge to Action Plan</i> with community providers

GOAL 3: Outcomes, Accountability, Research

Focus on clinical outcomes, system accountability and research

Strategy 1: *Enhance effectiveness and accountability*

The Young Minds Partnership services need to be as efficient and cost effective as possible. Standard expectations and benchmarks are required, as well as an integrated strategy across all services to measure outcomes and effectiveness.

Action	
1	In collaboration with partners, build system of patient reported outcome measures
2	Determine optimal model for the Young Minds Partnership program evaluation
3	Use evaluation data to inform decision making at the patient, organization and community levels
4	Institute Key Performance Indicators to regularly monitor and report on the Young Minds Partnership progress towards its goals and outcomes, and take action and make modifications as necessary to ensure success of the strategic plan
5	Based on data from KPIs, continuously strive for improvements in care and operations

Strategy 2: Maximize Efficiencies to Deliver High-Quality Care

The Young Minds Partnership must ensure the responsible and effective management of resources to provide cost-effective care across the continuum. We will need to ensure our resources are aligned to strategic priorities, as well as identifying the potential for new funding opportunities.

Action	
1	Reallocate financial and human resources to match strategic priorities
2	Determine sources of funding for new services to address clinical gaps, including advocating for new funding
3	Advocate through networks and organizations, e.g., Partners for Mental Health, to ensure parity in mental health care resources for children, youth and families

Strategy 3: Embed Research Into Clinical Practice

Research is too often regarded as an activity occurring outside the realm of clinical care. More awareness is needed to coordinate on-going data collection at the front line as the most effective way to ensure clinical practice is effective and efficient.

Action	
1	Establish the Young Minds Partnership research plan and promote research according to these priorities

Strategy 4: Improve Clinical Collaborative Research across the Young Minds Partnership

The Young Minds Partnership does not have a coordinated research program. This leads to competition and redundancy in research projects between CHEO and The Royal. There are numerous missed opportunities to advance science collaboratively in ways that would benefit both institutions and the families we collectively serve.

Action	
1	Develop communication plan regarding ongoing research at the two sites
2	Create a policy of reciprocity between the CHEO and The Royal Research Ethics Boards
3	Establish an "Idea Bank" to create an inventory of research ideas from staff and physicians. These would be "free" to investigators with time to convert into research projects
4	Develop a shared database of patient reported outcomes across the Young Minds Partnership

GOAL 4: Staff, Physician and Trainee Engagement

Engage and Support our Staff, Physicians, Students and Trainees

Strategy 1: *Improve Work Environment and Ensure Safety for Patients, Families and Staff*

Staff, physicians, students and trainees want a safe and healthy workplace, with a focus on improving the safety of clinical environments, engaging staff in decision making and supporting staff through wellness initiatives.

Action	
1	Clarify role expectations, job descriptions and eliminate redundancy in work
2	Ensure staff and physicians are working to full scope of practice
3	Develop a Key Performance Indicator to track and improve safety across the Young Minds Partnership
4	Develop education plan for staff, physicians and trainees regarding cultural competency
5	Review and enhance strategies to ensure the wellness of staff, physicians, students and trainees

Strategy 2: *Use Education to Promote and Support the Strategic Plan*

Staff, physicians, students and trainees want improved access to resources, education and training to ensure the provision of high-quality, evidence-based care for children, youth and families.

Action	
1	Educate all staff, physicians, students and trainees about the strategic plan
2	Create a process to ensure staff and physician education requests align with the Young Minds Partnership goals
3	Enhance knowledge exchange about best clinical practices within the Young Minds Partnership
4	Establish a culture of continual learning, skill enhancement and active team membership

8. How Will We Measure Change?

Having a plan is not enough. Over the next five years, we will be monitoring and measuring the impact of the changes we will make. To ensure there is accountability, we will develop an annual report card to share with our organizations, children, youth and families and to the community to report on our progress. We will be setting up internal structures to support and move these goals and actions forward. And we will engage our staff, physicians, patients, families and community providers in the design and implementation of these changes.

9. Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of the individuals and organizations who participated in the process to develop this plan. Your openness, passion and ideas for change helped to shape this plan and its vision to improve the mental health of our children and youth.

As well, thank you to all of the children, youth and families who shared their experiences and personal stories with us.

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