



News Release

For Immediate Release

Government of Canada invests in mental health and distress centres in Guelph

Distress centres experiencing a surge in demand with the impacts of COVID-19 on mental health

July 21, 2021

Guelph, Ontario

Canadians are reporting an increase in stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness. In fact, almost half of all Canadians have reported that their mental health has worsened since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Distress centres are a vital part of our community providing mental health support and resources to those in need. Across the country, these centres are seeing a surge in demand for mental health services.

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, announced an investment of \$9,275,000 in 57 distress centres in Canada through the Public Health Agency of Canada. This investment will support a range of distress centres across the country, including in rural and remote areas. It will also support centres that provide crisis support for specific populations—including seniors, Indigenous communities, LGBTQ2 populations and racially and linguistically diverse communities. Project funding will support recruitment, training, operating costs, and knowledge exchanges.

This is part of a \$50 million investment first announced in the 2020 Fall Economic Statement to support distress centres across Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. A second solicitation will be launched in the months ahead to provide funding to additional centres. A portion of these funds will support the development of resources that assist distress centres in meeting the needs of vulnerable populations during the pandemic.

Included in the national funding is supports for Canadian Mental Health Association- Waterloo Wellington of \$250,000 and Compass Community Services (formerly Family Counselling and Support Services for Guelph-Wellington) in the amount of \$150,000.

The CMHA Waterloo Wellington will be operationalizing this new funding to add additional staff to their Here 24/7 Service. The Here 24/7 Service is the gateway into all funded mental health and addictions services across Waterloo Region, Guelph and Wellington County, and is also the mobile crisis service for this area. The Here 24/7 Service has historically received 4,000 calls per month, but since the pandemic, it has been receiving 6,500 calls per month. There has also been a significant increase in the number of calls from people who are in crisis, or who are calling about a member of their family who is at risk. This additional funding will also add more Peer Workers within the Here 24/7 Service who reach out to frequent callers to prevent further escalation and crisis.

Compass Community Services will be utilizing this funding to ensure the telephone support services provide care to their more than 2,000 callers per month by hiring additional staff, increasing coverage for their support lines, maintaining and increasing software and system capacity, as well as supporting a new 2SLGBTQ+ line that will be established in the coming months.

All Canadians, including those who are at-risk and those living in rural and remote areas, need access to critical health and mental health resources and services. As we work with provinces and territories on expanding virtual services, we are making sure that Canadians can access emergency supports when they need them.





The Government is committed to supporting Canadians and their mental health through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. If you or a loved one is struggling, you can access the [Wellness Together Canada portal](#), or call 1-866-585-0445 or text WELLNESS to 741741 (adults) or 686868 (youth).

Quotes

“The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on all of us. Many are experiencing new or worsened mental health challenges during these times, and we are taking action to help Canadians in crisis. If you need help, know that you are not alone. This critical support will help distress centres offer assistance across the country, and boost other investments to improve mental health services. Connecting Canadians to appropriate supports and resources will have substantial benefits and will help those in crisis.”

The Honourable Patty Hajdu-Minister of Health

“The two projects funded in Guelph will provide a range of mental health support and care for young people and families in our community. This is especially important as we work our way out of the pandemic and its associated pressures from isolation and uncertainty into a new normal. Having partners like Compass Community Services and the Canadian Mental Health Association provides a way for the community to come together to provide wrap around support and to find new ways of improving mental wellness in Guelph.”

Lloyd Longfield- Member of Parliament for Guelph

We are deeply grateful for this additional staffing as it will allow us to support a significantly increased baseline of mental health and addictions needs in our community. This additional funding will add desperately needing staffing capacity to an increased number of anxious, depressed and overwhelmed people in our community, as well as additional staff to provide a mobile response to people who are imminently at risk.

Helen Fishburn-Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Mental Health Association

“Compass Community Services, formerly Family Counselling and Support Services for Guelph-Wellington, is thankful for the funding. It will ensure complete coverage and supervision 22 hours a day, 7 days a week for Guelph and Wellington residents. The services have saved lives and are an efficient, compassionate and cost saving service for our community. “

Joanne Young Evans-Executive Director, Compass Community Centre

Quick Facts

- One in three Canadians will be affected by mental illness in their lifetime.
- This funding announcement is part of a mental health investment through the Fall 2020 Economic Statement, which provided \$93 million dollars in overall funding to support mental health initiatives. The remaining \$43 million was earmarked to expand the Wellness Together Canada (WTC) portal.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada is continuing to work with the [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health](#) (CAMH) and other partners to implement and sustain an expanded pan-Canadian suicide prevention service. This service does not replace existing crisis lines and services. Rather, it will collaborate with distress centres across Canada to support improved access to services.
- The Wellness Together Canada portal provides free access to educational content, self-guided therapy, moderated peer-to-peer support, and one-to-one counselling with qualified health professionals.





Related Products

- [Backgrounder: Government of Canada invests millions into mental health and distress centres](#)

Associated Links

- [The Wellness Together Canada portal](#)
- [Mental Health and Wellness \(Government of Canada website\)](#)
- [Fall Economic Statement 2020](#)

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