

Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2019

To: Health system partners

From: Addiction Services of Thames Valley
Canadian Mental Health Association, Elgin
Canadian Mental Health Association, Middlesex
Canadian Mental Health Association, Oxford
South West Local Health Integration Network

Re: Working to Improve Mental Health and Addictions Services

Purpose

This communication provides background information on the decision of four community mental health and addictions agencies in Thames Valley to explore how a potential integration can improve mental health and addictions services for clients and families.

Addiction Services of Thames Valley
Canadian Mental Health Association, Elgin
Canadian Mental Health Association, Middlesex
Canadian Mental Health Association, Oxford
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Background

It is well understood that the demand for mental health and addiction services and supports has been increasing for some time, making it imperative to explore new models of care that maximize service delivery while reducing duplication and barriers. With this in mind, the Canadian Mental Health Associations in Thames Valley, and Addiction Services of Thames Valley initiated conversations in late 2018 about ways to strengthen services for clients and families in all communities served. These four agencies now wish to formalize these discussions to determine whether a full integration is appropriate. Although looking at ways to strengthen services started prior to the release of the government's health system transformation objectives, they are nicely aligned with the changes underway in Ontario's public health care system.

To date, these agencies have developed a Memorandum of Understanding (available on partner agencies' websites) that outlines work needed to realize the end-state vision of coordinated services that reduce barriers and increase access to case management and treatment. The primary objectives of this work is to:

- Enhance client experience and quality of care;
- Achieve more seamless continuum of effective and timely addictions and mental health services; and
- Improve services for people not typically well-served.

Through this process, each of the agencies will: (i) remain a separate corporation that is governed by its own board of directors; and (ii) continue to be operated by its current corporate membership.

Next steps

As part of the Memorandum of Understanding, a Transition Council will be established, with representation by board members and executive leadership from each of the respective agencies. The Transition Council initially will be an advisory body to enable the agencies to investigate and plan for the end-state.

The Canadian Mental Health Association Elgin continues to be led by an interim Supervisor. As this was not envisioned to be a long term solution, an interim plan will be established to support the involvement of the agency as work continues to realize the full and complete end-state.

We would like to stress that this work is focused on the best interests of clients in the short and long-term. As such, there will be no impact to service delivery; clients can expect to receive the same services they are receiving now.

As work progresses with this initiative, stakeholders will be kept informed through a series of regular communiques.

Below are key messages to support any public inquiries about this work.

Key messages

- It is well understood that the demand for mental health and addiction services and supports has been increasing for some time, making it imperative to explore new models of care that maximize service delivery while reducing duplication and barriers.
- With this in mind, the Canadian Mental Health Associations in Thames Valley, and Addiction Services of Thames Valley initiated conversations in late 2018 about ways to strengthen services for clients and families in all communities served.
- These four agencies now wish to formalize these conversations to determine whether a full integration is appropriate.
- Although these conversations started prior to the release of the government's health system transformation objectives, they are aligned with the changes underway in Ontario's public health care system.
- To date, these agencies have developed a Memorandum of Understanding (available on partner agencies' websites) that outlines work needed in order to realize the end-state vision of coordinated services that reduce barriers and increase access to case management and treatment.
- Through this work, partners will aim to: enhance client experience and quality of care; achieve a more seamless continuum of effective and timely addictions and mental health services; and improve services for people not typically well-served.
- Through this process, each of the agencies will: (i) remain a separate corporation that is governed by its own board of directors; and (ii) continue to be controlled by its current corporate membership.
- Although this work will unfold within the timeline necessary, the agencies will monitor the broader health system changes underway and pace this work accordingly.
- We would like to stress that this work will have no impact to service delivery; clients can expect to receive the same services they are receiving now.