

Collaborative Quality Improvement Plan Change Concepts and Change Ideas

Increasing overall access to community mental health and addictions services

Rate of emergency department visits as first point of contact for mental health and addictions-related care.

About the indicator—This indicator measures the number of individuals for whom the emergency department was the first point of contact for mental health and addictions (MHA) care.

When access to timely community-based mental health assessment and treatment is insufficient, people who require services may use the emergency department as their first point of contact. Therefore, a high rate of use of the emergency department as a first point of contact for mental health and addictions care may indicate inadequate access to outpatient physician- and community-based care.

Key Resources

- [eQIP – Improving Access to Community Mental Health and Addictions Services](#) (English only)
- [Ontario Health quality standards](#)



Change concept 1: Support early recognition of patients/clients at risk for emergency department visits.

Use community programs and primary care screening to identify patients/clients at risk for crisis to determine and set up appropriate supports

- “Incidence of Access to Ambulatory Mental Health Care Prior to a Psychiatric Emergency Department Visit Among Adults in Ontario, 2010-2018” ([Kurdyak et al, 2021](#); English only)

Utilize tools that aid in early identification of MHA serious risk symptoms and behaviours and allow timely intervention

- [Keeping Your Patients Safe, 2017, Centre for Effective Practice](#) (English only)



Change concept 2: Improve access to complex and crisis care

Seek out and establish partnerships in the community to provide increased access to complex and crisis mental health care (e.g., ride-along services, mobile crisis units, drop-in services, navigation services like OntarioConnex)

- “Mental Health Services in Canada: Barriers and Cost-Effective Solutions to Increase Access” ([Moroz et al, 2020](#); English only)
- [Helping you access the services you need in eastern Ontario](#)
- [Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario](#)



Change concept 3: Provide education, training, and guidance to health care providers

Provide general education, training, and clinical guidance to providers on early recognition of imminent mental health risks and actions to take

- *Review of Coordinated/Centralized Access Mechanisms: Evidence, Current State, and Implications* ([Rush and Saini, 2016](#); English only)
- [CMH – Continuing Education Programs and Courses](#)
- [RNAO – Mental health and Addictions Initiative](#) (English only)
- [Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health Resource Hub](#)