

FAMILY OF SUPPORT: CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Impact Report Year Three



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**CANADA'S
CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL
FOUNDATIONS**

This is the third annual impact report from Canada's Children's Hospital Foundations (CCHF) describing investments made by the Family of Support: Child & Youth Mental Health Initiative. Covering the period from January 1 to December 31, 2022, the report presents an overview of the mental health programs children's hospitals across the country are delivering, as well as hospitals' work to deliver vital training to hospital teams. An update on foundation-by-foundation results is provided in the Year Three Scorecard on page 21.

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The Family of Support: Child & Youth Mental Health Initiative is helping children's hospitals adapt and innovate at a time when more young people than ever are seeking mental health care. Thank you.





When Children's Healthcare Canada recently surveyed parents about their children's mental health, the results were stark but, sadly, not surprising.

Roughly half of all parents surveyed (48%) said their children had experienced new mental health challenges amid the pandemic. A slightly higher proportion (54%) said they intended to seek out mental health services for one or more of their children. Among parents whose children had a pre-existing mental health concern, 62% said the situation had deteriorated during the pandemic.

These trends have contributed to significant increases in patient volumes at emergency departments across Canada, and two-year waits for non-emergency support in many communities.

Mental health care providers at Canada's 13 children's hospitals say the current challenge goes beyond patient volumes. Over and above the high prevalence of mental health concerns among children and youth, children's hospitals are seeing growing complexity and acuity: young people are presenting with more severe symptoms and in need of more intensive interventions.

In this context, the Family of Support: Child & Youth Mental Health Initiative truly matters more than ever. The support delivered to children's hospitals through this ambitious national partnership is not only helping care teams keep pace with unprecedented need, it's helping researchers and clinicians innovate and collaborate to develop mental health interventions whose impact will be felt – by individuals and communities – for decades.

At a time when parents, schools and primary care providers all see young people who are struggling, children's hospitals are beacons. Support from Empire Company Limited and The Sobey Foundation is helping these entities continue to fulfill their critical leadership roles in Canadian communities: as places of care and compassion, as hubs of innovation and discovery and as centres of invaluable expertise whose influence extends to classrooms, households and policy tables.

It's been widely – and accurately – reported in the media that children's hospitals are racing to keep pace with surging demand for mental health care. The immense need for care is reflected in the pages of this report, but so is a more hopeful side of the story. This 2022 impact report shows that children's hospitals continue to advance important clinical research, test new ideas, build capacity and optimize processes to make the most of existing resources. All of these efforts reflect an unwavering shared commitment to helping young people with mental health challenges manage, improve and thrive.

Remarkable things are happening every single day at each of Canada's children's hospitals. CCHF is proud to help fuel this vital work – and we remain tremendously grateful for the partnership of knowledgeable, committed philanthropists like Empire Company Limited and The Sobey Foundation, who put impact first and trust hospital leaders to lead the way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Adam Starkman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Adam Starkman
President & Chief Executive Officer
Canada's Children's Hospital Foundations



Mitigating the mental health effects of physical illness. Boosting mental health literacy in communities. Innovating to prevent suicide among youth at high risk. These are just a few of the evidence-based, locally responsive efforts changing lives across Canada through the Family of Support: Child & Youth Mental Health Initiative.

The programs being advanced by Family of Support are diverse precisely because The Sobey Foundation and Empire Company Limited have empowered local children's hospitals to take action where local experts see the greatest opportunity for impact. When I speak to experts and care teams across Canada, they express gratitude not only for the resources this partnership lets them invest, but for the faith our partners have shown in them by giving them the freedom to pursue the work that will make the greatest difference locally.

As our partnership (now in its fourth year) matures, a picture of national impact grounded in local action is coming into clearer view – as evidenced by the stories and program descriptions throughout this report. What's more, the threads of collaboration and exchange among Canada's 13 children's hospitals continue to grow, increasing the potential for successful local initiatives to spread and scale from coast to coast to coast.

Fundraising engagement across the Empire Company Limited family of businesses is also deepening. Even at a time when many customers are feeling the strains of inflation and other financial pressures, they continue to show remarkable generosity – and teammates continue to make vital efforts to engage their fellow community members in the cause of child and youth mental health.

CCHF is committed to pursuing even more engagement and support, in-store and beyond – and I know we'll continue to gain momentum as fundraising success and local health impact continue to reinforce each other. The Family of Support: Child & Youth Mental Health Initiative has an invaluable new champion in CCHF's recently appointed CEO Adam Starkman. Adam is a dynamic philanthropic leader who has already made important contributions at both CCHF and SickKids Foundation, and I know he will help to guide this partnership to even greater success.

On behalf of Canada's 13 children's hospitals and their associated foundations, thank you once again for your powerful commitment to the promotion of child and youth mental health. You're providing vital support to hospital experts and care teams as they work to meet the urgent needs of today while laying foundations for prevention, early intervention and life-changing innovation tomorrow. The programs you're enabling constitute some of the most critical work in Canadian healthcare today, and the impact of your investments will be felt for generations.

With deep gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Gillivan'.

Jennifer Gillivan

President & Chief Executive Officer, IWK Foundation
Chair, Board of Directors, Canada's Children's Hospital Foundations

Our Partnership on Mental Health: More Urgent Than Ever

When Empire Company Limited embarked on the Family of Support initiative with CCHF in January 2020, both partners understood that mental health was an area that needed urgent investment. Demand for mental health care among children and youth was growing, and health systems were struggling to keep pace. But no one connected to this work could foresee how the mental health landscape across the country was about to be transformed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With schools and extracurricular activities suspended, family rhythms disrupted, widespread economic strain and a general state of fear and uncertainty across society, millions of children and youth experienced unprecedented levels of stress and upheaval. Experts believe that the mental health effects of this extraordinary period will persist for years to come. While the full impact of the pandemic period – from learning disruptions to missed opportunities for early intervention – will only be revealed over time, children’s hospitals report numerous signs of negative effects on children and youth. A few examples:



In Quebec, hospital admissions for **mental health concerns** rose 40% in the early part of 2021 from a pre-pandemic baseline. In Ontario, average wait times for community-based mental health treatment are at least three times recommended clinical wait time, stretching to 2.5 years for some specialized services. Across Canada, Kids Help Phone saw calls to its Crisis Text Line roughly triple in the early stages of the pandemic – and then remain stable at this elevated level.



Hospitals have observed marked increases in children and youth presenting with **eating disorders** such as anorexia nervosa. One [study](#) carried out across six children’s hospitals in Canada during the first wave of the pandemic found that average monthly anorexia diagnoses surged from 24.5 to 40, and hospitalizations for patients with anorexia nervosa rose from 7.5 per month to 20.



McMaster Children’s Hospital – Hamilton Health Sciences in Ontario saw **substance use disorders** among patients double in a year. A national survey conducted on behalf of the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction [found](#) that young people were most likely to report mental health and substance use concerns, and reported less ability to handle pandemic stress.



An international study led by [researchers](#) affiliated with The Hospital for Sick Children and Alberta Children’s Hospital Research Institute found that while Emergency Department (ED) visits overall fell by 32% during the pandemic, visits related to **suicide** attempts or suicidal ideation rose by 22% and 8% respectively.

About the Partnership

In 2020, The Sobeys Foundation, Empire Company Limited and Canada's Children's Hospital Foundations (CCHF) came together to launch the Family of Support: Child & Youth Mental Health Initiative. This innovative national partnership, developed in consultation with Canada's 13 children's hospitals and their foundations, is investing millions in mental health early interventions for children and youth across Canada.

Our partnership supports mental health care in two important ways:

1. Each children's hospital has chosen one or more local, evidence-based initiatives to receive support – either a new program or pilot, or the expansion or enhancement of an existing program to support the mental health of children and youth.

2. In addition to providing generous contributions for specific programs, Empire leads an annual in-store campaign (at stores across 17 banners), providing additional funds that hospitals allocate to their areas of greatest need when it comes to care and training in child and youth mental health.



13 CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS.
130,000 EMPIRE COMPANY LIMITED TEAMMATES.
ONE FAMILY.



Architecture of the Strategy

Although investments in prevention and early interventions have the greatest potential to reduce the harm mental illness causes, acute care demands a large share of the resources allocated to mental health. With health systems racing to keep pace with surging demand for care, many children and youth facing mental illness cannot access services until their issues escalate to a crisis – at which point their prospects of excellent outcomes have already dimmed. These dynamics have intensified during the pandemic but investments from The Sobey Foundation and Empire Company Limited are helping hospitals and care teams continue to innovate, collaborate and build capacity – all to break the cycle of crisis and help more young people sooner.



Strategic Themes

The Family of Support: Child & Youth Mental Health Initiative prioritizes early interventions in child and youth mental health. It supports care and training initiatives led by the 13 children's hospitals in the Canada's Children's Hospital Foundations network.

Care

- Create and adapt clinical spaces to nurture patients and families and to send the message that mental health matters.
- Develop programs to enhance care and service delivery for children at risk of or in the early stages of mental health challenges to prevent acute crises.
- Leverage the 'living labs' and vast patient cohorts within hospitals and community sites to test the effectiveness of current early intervention strategies and ensure they are delivering value for families.

Training

- Build capacity for care by educating the next generation of mental health leaders and community providers.
- Expand mental health training for pediatricians and frontline healthcare workers so they can more quickly and accurately identify and refer children and youth with mental health issues.
- Invest in mental health literacy and prevention programs to foster healthier, more resilient families and communities.

Five Themes of Support

An important strength of the Family of Support initiative is grounded in the trust The Sobey Foundation and Empire Company Limited have shown for children’s hospitals by empowering them to allocate funds to the areas they see as most urgent. While the partnership is structured around shared goals – emphasizing care and training and prioritizing early intervention wherever possible – a review of hospitals’ deployment of Family of Support funds surfaces some notable themes. These themes offer a window into the strategies children’s hospitals are using to address the mental health needs of children and youth. They also point to the ways in which mental health concerns intersect with other areas of hospitals’ work, such as the treatment of physical conditions and the delivery of emergency care.

1. Community Capacity and Knowledge Mobilization

Children’s hospitals are vital centres of expertise whose impact extends across their communities and throughout Canada. Through the Family of Support initiative, several hospitals are creating resources that share mental health knowledge and training with fellow care providers or other professionals. This work helps to promote high-quality, evidence-based practices in both clinical and community settings.



This year once again, the **IWK** has invested in **The Learning Link**, a hub of expertise for Nova Scotian and Maritime mental health clinicians and community partners. Although the creation of a physical space for The Learning Link has been delayed by the pandemic, progress on the creation and dissemination of virtual offerings has been steady. To name just one program within the wider Learning Link envelope, Shelf, an online source for resources such as training presentations and manuals, fielded more than 33,000 searches from care professionals in 2022.

Family of Support funding has been helping **CHU Sainte-Justine** to upgrade **10 rooms dedicated to mental health care and training**, including seven rooms for therapy and three for observation. The observation rooms will enable early-career professionals to engage with patients and families under the supervision of their advisors, building the hospital’s capacity and helping to develop the next generation of clinical

leaders in mental health. Although the project has experienced construction delays related to the pandemic, five rooms became operational in February 2023 and the remaining five are expected to be completed by the fall of 2023.

The **Janeway Children’s Health and Rehabilitation Centre** continues to work toward the opening of an important new regional resource: **The North Star Child & Youth Advocacy Centre**, a facility designed to meet the needs of children who are believed to have experienced abuse. The pandemic has delayed the opening of this centre, but the development of clinical spaces and the preparatory training activities are largely complete. The Janeway also continues to build and maintain strong relationships with the partners (such as police forces and social workers from the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development) who are collaborating to bring this model, successful in other regions, to Newfoundland and Labrador for the first time.

2. Intersections of Mental and Physical Health

Physical and mental health are entwined in many ways – some well understood, some still being explored. Children’s hospitals have developed numerous interventions to support the overall well-being of children and youth for whom physical challenges such as chronic disease or chronic pain threaten mental health, or whose mental health challenges may lead to physical issues such as substance use or self-harm.



Children who suffer regular or even constant pain due to chronic illness can experience devastating mental health effects. As children miss out on school and social milestones, they can develop severe depression, begin to self-medicate with harmful substances or even deliberately harm themselves. To help prevent these outcomes, **BC Children’s Hospital** is investing Family of Support funds to develop a program – PainCare 360 – designed to simultaneously manage pain and monitor mental health. **PainCare 360** represents a foundational step in a journey to transform pediatric pain care.

Aided by Family of Support, in 2022 **CHEO** continued to operate the **Head to Toe program (H2T)**, which performs suicide screening for all admitted, inpatient youth aged 12 and older using a brief, validated questionnaire. If a patient answers “yes” to any of the four questions in the screening tool, nurses ensure that the patient receives a timely mental health assessment. This program responds to evidence that young people who present in the Emergency Department (ED) for physical injuries ostensibly unrelated to a mental health concern may in fact be at elevated risk for suicide. The screening tool ensures that we provide appropriate care and support to every child and youth who enters the ED – never missing an opportunity to provide suicide-prevention support when it’s needed.

Jim Pattison Children’s Hospital is working with the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC), Medavie Health Services West and the Government of Saskatchewan to deploy a small fleet of mobile clinics that bring medical care, including mental health care, to the seven First Nations communities that make up the STC. The **STC Mobile Health Bus**, which includes a dental team, mental health workers and a paramedic, was launched in 2021 and proved to be an effective way of expanding access to care. In 2022, the bus saw 425 mental health patients; almost 90% of these were children and youth. Our partnership, funded in part by Family of Support, made preparations in 2022 to respond to ongoing community need by launching two more mobile mental health vans in the spring of 2023.

More than 28% of children and youth with physical illnesses face mental health challenges. **The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)** continues to deploy funding from Family of Support to provide early assessment of youth with significant physical illness, ensuring that care teams are able to make the most of critical windows of opportunity for early intervention. Specifically, SickKids is using Family of Support funds to expand access to **neuropsychological assessments**, this year performing a total of 78 assessments and providing follow-up care as appropriate based on the findings. This program is described in greater detail on page 20.



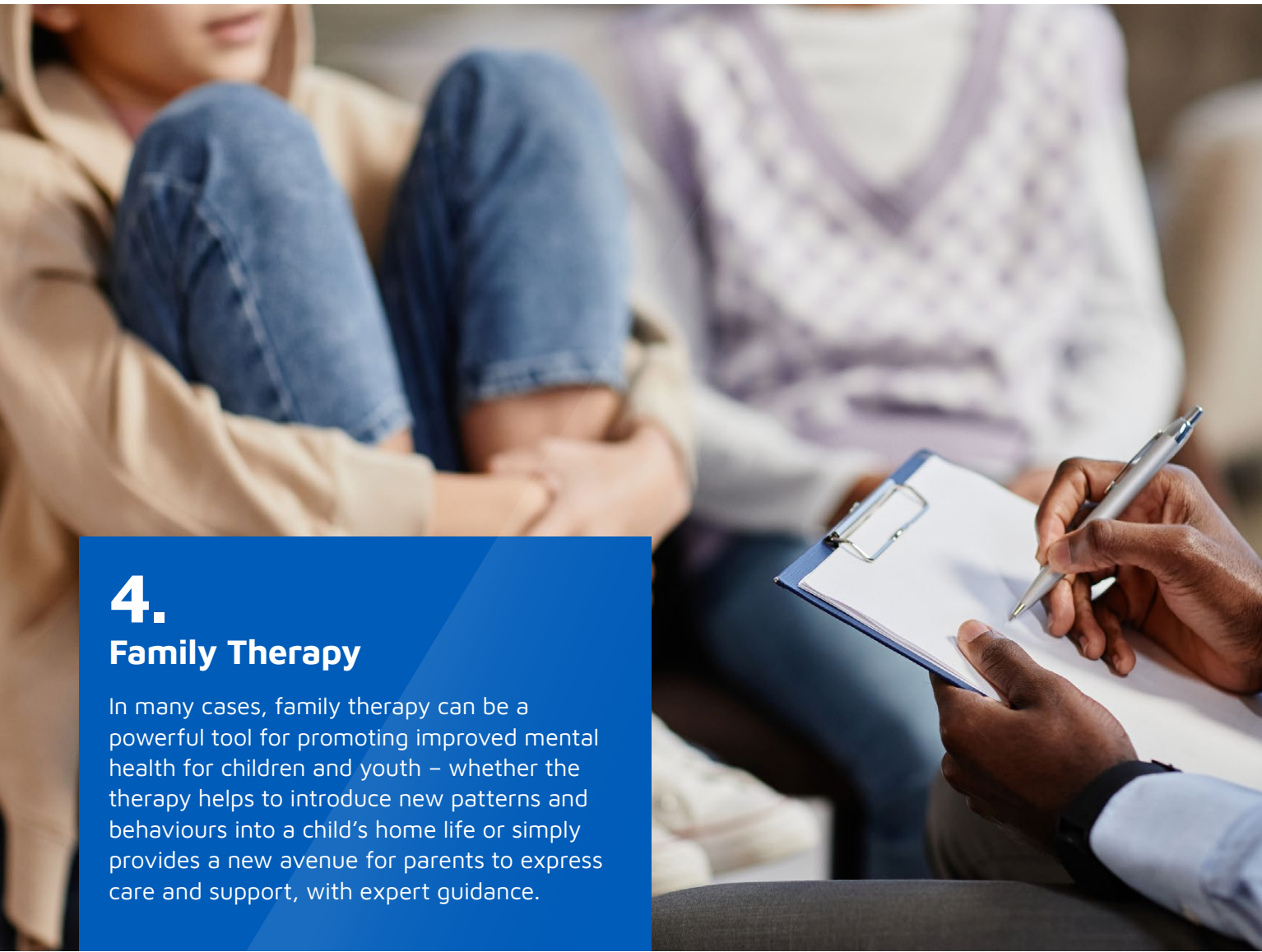
3. Research and Innovation

Prevention and treatment strategies for many mental health conditions have not advanced in decades. Family of Support investments are helping Canada's children's hospitals (and their associated research entities) to advance our understanding of the mental health of children and youth, and to effectively integrate research into community care. These ambitious and collaborative research initiatives are leading the way to a future in which fewer young people experience challenges – and those who do get the right help more quickly.

The **Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation** continues to allocate Family of Support funds to **Mental Health Research 4 Kids**, an innovative program focused on children and adolescents ages 0–18 years old. This program is led by researchers at the University of Calgary and the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute and linked to The Summit: Marian & Jim Sinneave Centre for Youth Resilience. The official opening of The Summit in March 2023 was an important milestone for their research program, as we continue to work toward their goal of enlisting 10,000 participants – across all research topics and initiatives – to create one of the largest and best-characterized pediatric mental health samples in the world: a true living lab.

In late 2022, the **Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba**, the research division of the Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba, announced a new research theme focused on the mental health of children and youth: **PRIME** – Promoting Innovation in Mental Health through eHealth Excellence. Funded entirely by the Family of Support partnership, PRIME will enable researchers to develop and study eHealth models focused on delivering more timely access to care and support for a range of groups, such as neurodiverse youth and young people experiencing intersections of mental illness and other issues such as disability, chronic illness or systemic racism.

McMaster Children's Hospital is working to advance the practice of **suicide prevention** through a clinical trial of an innovative six-week psychotherapy program called I AM SAFE. The trial, which is described in greater detail on page 18, is being carried out in collaboration with Alberta Children's Hospital and SickKids.



4. Family Therapy

In many cases, family therapy can be a powerful tool for promoting improved mental health for children and youth – whether the therapy helps to introduce new patterns and behaviours into a child’s home life or simply provides a new avenue for parents to express care and support, with expert guidance.

Through funding from the Family of Support initiative, **Montreal Children’s Hospital** has continued to not only deliver but scale the gold standard intervention for young people with eating disorders: **Family-Based Therapy (FBT)**. Montreal Children’s was the first hospital in Quebec to provide licensed and accredited FBT for eating disorders, primarily anorexia and bulimia. These illnesses have both psychological and physical components, and can have a dramatic impact on growth, brain function, bone strength, sexual development and cardiac health. By intervening where possible before patients’ conditions have become severe enough to warrant inpatient care, FBT has led to a drastic reduction in the number and duration of hospitalizations. The Family of Support partnership has enabled continued investment in this program during and since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the prevalence of eating disorders increased dramatically.

At **Children’s Hospital** in London, Ontario, the **GET-Care Clinic (Get Evidence-based Treatment Clinic)** provides evidence-based assessment and group cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for children, adolescents and their families. This group therapy is tailored to children and youth with anxiety. Because patients who are identified as likely to benefit from group CBT enter the program directly following a standardized diagnostic interview, they receive help more quickly. Meanwhile, the wider mental health program at Children’s is able to free up resources for patients who may need more intensive one-on-one support or a more complex assessment process. In 2022, Family of Support funds were allocated in large part to the hiring of dedicated professionals to optimize patient access, flow and support; these included a nurse practitioner, a program administrative assistant and child and youth worker. A minority of funds helped to procure diagnostic tools and resources to enhance our ability to efficiently identify the most appropriate candidates for this program.

5. Urgent Care

Experts agree that prevention and early intervention are vital to improving mental health outcomes for children and youth. Yet hospitals are confronted daily with the results of past underinvestment in early intervention: they face enormous demand for urgent mental health care, often seeing children and youth whose situation has become life-threatening. Even as they seek to improve early detection and support in the community, hospitals are working to enhance the care they provide to patients in urgent care and emergency settings, aiming to help young people weather mental health crises and get started on the road to recovery.



Through funding from the Family of Support initiative, **Health Sciences Centre (HSC) Winnipeg Children's Hospital** continues to deliver the innovative **Urgent Tele-Mental Health Service** launched in 2021 to meet the needs of children and youth in rural and remote communities. Although Indigenous peoples represent just 15% of Manitoba's population, about 45% of child and adolescent patients who seek mental health care from Winnipeg Children's are transported from Indigenous and rural communities. The Urgent Tele-Mental Health Service enables these young people to be assessed quickly by knowledgeable care providers at Winnipeg Children's, and then be connected with appropriate resources – whether further remote support at the hospital or other care providers closer to home. A large majority of young people who use the service are able to access the care they need without leaving their families, friends and community support systems. Remote consultations also create opportunities to engage patients' families and provide guidance on effective ways to provide support at home.

Many young people experiencing acute mental health challenges turn to the Emergency Department (ED) at **Jim Pattison Children's Hospital** for short-stay crisis care. Thanks in part to Family of Support, the hospital now has two dedicated spaces in its ED for patients in mental health crisis, including the **Mental Health Intensive Care Room**. Over the past few years, these spaces have undergone upgrades and operational improvements to make them safer and more comfortable for patients and to enable ED staff to provide the best possible care while protecting their own safety and that of other ED patients. If historical trends persist, we expect usage of these facilities to grow at about 5% year over year.

At **CHEO**, recent investments to increase ED capacity to support young people during mental health crises have focused on personnel. Family of Support has helped to fund the presence of a dedicated **mental health-focused child and youth counsellor in the ED, 24/7**. This around-the-clock presence not only ensures specialized care for patients who present at the ED in mental health crisis, it also provides important support to allied care professionals whose primary focus is not mental health but who may be caring for patients with an illness or injury that is exacerbating a mental health challenge.

The Stollery Children's Hospital has continued its work to **transform pediatric mental health care** in Alberta this year. In 2021, the Stollery made a range of important strides, including the opening of a new mental health walk-in clinic and the creation of a new outpatient psychiatry clinic. This year, these advances have begun to deliver benefits: since January 2022, for example, 10% of children presenting to the ED with mental health concerns were successfully diverted at triage to the Stollery mental health walk-in clinic. This diversion rate signals effective and appropriate screening of young people at low risk or who do not need psychiatric care; the result is effective care for the "diverted" patients at the walk-in clinic, and freed-up capacity for young people with more serious needs. All other aspects of the transformation also continue, including capacity-building led by our clinical nurse educator, who facilitated 39 education sessions for a total of 527 professionals in 2022, and the operation of our new Outpatient Psychiatry Clinic, which saw 168 new consults last year.

A World Without Prevention? The Pandemic Gave Us a Glimpse.

Few would argue that early intervention is not an important goal in child and youth mental health. But it can be difficult for prevention-oriented initiatives to attract attention and support when they “compete” for those resources with crisis intervention, whose impact is so clear and sometimes life-saving.

Sadly, the pandemic created conditions in which society has experienced what it means when standard mechanisms of prevention and early intervention cease to function. Tracy Palmquist, Director, Children, Youth & Families, Addiction & Mental Health at Alberta Health Services, observes a fact whose full impact is hard to measure. “For close to two years, almost no one connected to public systems regularly had eyes on kids. The only groups that were still working in person were health care and the police.”

Palmquist goes on to list all the supports and contacts kids might typically have: child and family services, community programs, disability services, probation (in cases of adolescents involved in the justice system) and, of course, schools. In addition to the educational and social functions schools perform, they also facilitate psychoeducational assessments that can help educators and care providers identify things like

ADHD, autism and mood disorders. In cases of abuse or family challenges negatively affecting young people’s mental health, it’s often teachers and school staff who are best positioned to notice and engage support.

The extraordinary levels of need and acuity that hospitals are witnessing today have emerged from the conditions Palmquist describes. Although mental health care in Canada was far from perfect in 2019, it was a landscape in which professionals who engage with kids but are not specialists in mental health could notice and address emerging concerns – whether through referrals or low-intensity interventions like school-based programs. The removal of those supports combined with the isolation and disruption young people experienced during the pandemic will have long-lasting consequences.

Over the past three years, Family of Support investments in prevention and

early intervention – including through the dissemination of mental health training and knowledge – have been building exactly the capacities that the COVID-19 pandemic stripped away. Because of the Family of Support initiative, hospitals and communities are becoming better equipped to notice, identify and respond to early manifestations of mental health challenges – a practice whose value has never been more clear.



Tracy Palmquist

“I Want to Get Better.”

For a long time, I avoided telling other people my story, probably because I was scared of being judged and treated differently. Now, it is a source of pride. That part of my life and my path is what has forged the person I am today.

Lots of young people experience mental health problems, but not very many talk about them. By sharing what I've been through, I hope to overcome this stigma in order to inspire other kids to open up about their own psychological distress and get the help they need, without any shame attached to it.

At that time in my life, everything was dark. I wanted to put an end to it all. I was convinced that was the only way to escape my suffering and the feeling of despair that wouldn't let up. I didn't think much of myself back then, so much so that I sought out any opportunity to self-destruct. My parents' unconditional love and attention wasn't enough. Nothing was.

One day, it just took over. Even getting out of bed in the morning was too much for me. My life was in danger. I needed help.

That's when Sainte-Justine stepped in. Checking into the psychiatry unit was a big turning point for me. That's when my hope of getting better was rekindled. I realized that things were far from over. The teams at Sainte-Justine helped me see that there was a glimmer of light at the end of a very long tunnel. But I had to understand and accept that there wouldn't be any miracle solutions and that I had to give therapy my all. It would be long and hard, but it would be worth it in the end.

When I left Sainte-Justine, it was only the starting line on the road to recovery. But with the assistance of the incredible team of professionals, I had already accomplished the most important thing of all: I actually wanted to get better. I had more confidence that I could make it happen. I didn't feel ashamed of what I was going through. And I found, somewhere deep inside me, the will to keep living and make the most of every moment.

I worked hard, from one treatment, one step forward and one victory to the next. Even today, I'm still at it, and I know there's lots more to be done. Every day, I fight to overcome severe anxiety and cope with my intense emotions. They're not pushing me toward the path of self-destruction anymore. They're a source of strength.

Three years later, I'm still here. Every little win fills me with joy.

I dream of the day where all young people across Quebec who are struggling can get the right care.



Migration and Mental Health

Laura Callaghan, a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner at the IWK focused on mental health, discusses what's special about providing care to newcomer youth – and the wide-reaching impact of the training she's pursued.

What are your responsibilities at the IWK?

I have three main areas of work. First, I support youth who are involved in the criminal justice system in some way. They might be in custody or on probation, for example. I also work with newcomers – in some cases young people who have just arrived in Canada and are beginning their settlement process, or in other cases young people who have been here for a few years and are beginning to face some mental health challenges. Finally, I'm involved in program development work at the IWK. Right now, we're working on a strategy to guide and structure our work with newcomers.



Laura Callaghan

What are some key considerations when it comes to meeting the mental health needs of newcomer youth?

Access is important for everyone – but access is an especially important consideration when we're thinking about care for newcomers because they can face a lot of barriers, from language to transportation to simply not knowing how to navigate a new system. A few years ago, the IWK created a formal partnership with the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) in order to improve access to mental health care. We operate out of the ISANS site, so families can come to a place where they already receive other services and if they want to speak to me about a mental health concern, they can do that. There's no need to travel to another location or navigate another system. In some cases, I can assess, diagnose and treat a young person right on-site. In other cases, I accompany them into a next step – whether it's an eating disorder clinic or an assessment to see if they might be on the autism spectrum or somewhere else.

How do you make sure you're providing culturally congruent care?

It's an ongoing learning process, and people working in different aspects of settlement, health care and social work get better by working together – and of course by listening to the communities we serve. I've already mentioned our collaboration with ISANS, who often refer families to us if they're having a mental health concern. I've also worked with – and learned from – the National Newcomer Navigation Network (N4), which facilitates learning and collaboration among professionals who deliver health care and social services to newcomers. Working effectively with newcomers involves a wide range of capabilities, from very concrete things like having rapid access to language interpretation to quite subtle, personal things like cultivating a sense of humility, learning to pay close attention and develop a sense of when you really don't know what's going on in the room – say between a teenager and their parent, when their language and culture are different from your own.



What do you think is the impact of the training you've pursued through the IWK?

The impact is far-reaching, because in a role like mine you have so many connections to the community – so many opportunities to offer support and answer questions. For example, a young person I've been working with who's been involved in the justice system was getting ready to return to community school and I made a suggestion to an educator in the justice system about some steps that might help that process go smoothly. That person suggested that I offer guidance to the school as well, which I did. And then I was asked to return to deliver a workshop to some other educators who were seeking this kind of information. So the expertise we build at the IWK flows out into the community every day.

What's next for your program?

We're currently working on a strategic plan, which we hope will help us to build on some of the capabilities I've been describing. The plan has four pillars. One is Capacity & Competency – so building our own, and also working with schools and community organizations and others to build our collective capacity to support newcomer mental health. A second is Prevention & Promotion – which focuses on early supports and interventions, whether that means connecting someone with care earlier or simply making sure that all our resources are available in multiple languages. The third is Treatment & Intervention – building access to those. And the last pillar is ongoing Program Development. Communities and their needs are always changing – and happily, there's always new research and new evidence about effective interventions. So that last pillar is meant to ensure that we're able to continue evolving and keeping pace with community needs.

**Empire Company Limited
and The Sobey Foundation
Many Dimensions
of Impact**

Family of Support contributes directly to training for professionals like Laura Callaghan and helps to achieve the significant ripple effects she describes. But your support does even more. It helps children's hospitals gain the flexibility to initiate innovative collaborations like the one Laura describes with the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS). Investments in children's hospitals also deliver benefit far beyond the walls of the hospital, sending mental health expertise like Laura's into schools, the justice system and anywhere else young people need support.

Preventing (the Next) Mental Health Crisis

The I AM SAFE program provides follow-up support to young people who have arrived in hospital because of suicidal ideation or even an attempt. For that reason, it might sound strange to describe I AM SAFE as a prevention program.



Dr. Khrista Boylan



Christina Carr

But the follow-up support offered through I AM SAFE is indeed designed for prevention: therapists work with patients and families to build the tools to prevent further deterioration and/or a recurrence of the patient's mental health crisis. It does this by offering intensive, family-based therapy following the patient's trip to the emergency room, thus helping patients not only recover from crisis but get on a path to building better mental health alongside those close to them.

Dr. Khrista Boylan, the lead investigator of the McMaster Children's Hospital study site describes the importance of this work:

"It's difficult when a young patient returns to the emergency room with a second mental health crisis in a short period of time. For most, the cause of the relapse is as simple as the youth and caregiver not being able to talk about the teen's distress together outside of the hospital."

Christina Carr, I AM SAFE intervention therapist, describes her experience with the intervention:

"The privilege of taking on the role of the I AM SAFE research therapist has helped me to see – first hand – the importance of working on communication between the youth and family immediately after discharge. By identifying and working on communication deficits immediately at the start of the program, I have been able to help families work through these barriers. They learn and practice ways to help keep the lines of communication open about the youth's suicidal thoughts, thus allowing them to work together and use their personalized safety plan to help manage distress."

The I AM SAFE intervention is a clinical trial currently underway at SickKids and McMaster Children's Hospital. Alberta Children's Hospital hopes to launch the clinical trial at their site in the coming weeks. Family of Support has been fuelling I AM SAFE for the past three years, helping clinicians deliver and evaluate a promising intervention while strengthening collaborative research relationships in the CCHF network.

PATIENT STORY

During the early months of 2022, the Beazley family from Dartmouth, NS, were celebrating the completion of 12-year-old Canon's cancer treatment. However, this celebration was short-lived as Canon, while physically healthy, began experiencing panic attacks. This marked the beginning of his mental health journey.

A year earlier, Canon had been diagnosed with a Stage 1 Wilms Tumour (the most common kidney cancer in children). He underwent surgery to remove his left kidney and immediately began chemotherapy. He endured 26 weeks of treatment and was finally able to "ring the bell" at the IWK, signifying the end of his treatment in late November 2021.

Life had returned to normal for Canon, and his family was thrilled to see him enjoying his regular activities. But one day, seemingly out of the blue, Canon experienced a debilitating panic attack while warming up for a hockey game. Terrified by his pounding and racing heart, Canon asked his mom, Shelly, to take him to the IWK's emergency department. After a thorough examination, including multiple tests, no physical reasons for his symptoms were identified.

The panic attacks continued, accompanied by intermittent palpitations throughout his days. Canon also began experiencing feelings of "derealization" and "depersonalization." People having these experiences feel they're observing themselves from outside their bodies, or that things around them aren't real – as if they were in a dream. These symptoms made it a struggle for Canon to do things he normally loved doing: socializing, going to school, paddling and playing hockey.

Canon was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) stemming from his cancer experience. He began regularly scheduled therapy sessions, medication to manage his anxiety and follow-up with his care team members. His family immediately noticed a big change. He became more present and better able to function, including by actively participating in his own therapy.

Canon spent eight months receiving treatment and almost a year working through his story and learning coping skills. This holistic team approach has enabled Canon to re-engage in life fully. Today, he's doing great and is back to doing all the things that make him a happy kid. He also finds time to engage in regular fundraising activity for the IWK, to thank his care teams for being with him through every stage of his cancer journey, physical and mental.

When Physical Illness Leads to Mental Distress

Canon Beazley developed post-traumatic stress disorder. The IWK was there.



For Developing Brains, Timing is Everything.

Dr. Julia Young, part of the neuropsychology team at SickKids, describes how comprehensive neuropsychological assessments can help to connect young people with the right supports – and how the Family of Support initiative has helped her team make progress against their top priority: faster access.



What is a neuropsychological assessment?

It's a comprehensive assessment of how a person's brain is working for them, essentially. We look at many different dimensions, including intellectual functioning, memory, language, attention, motor skills and school skills. The goal is to get as complete a picture as possible of a young person's current condition and function, and any supports they might need for the next steps in their development.

What does the process involve?

The assessment itself typically takes a full day. It involves different kinds of testing – from reading comprehension to memory tests to motor-based activities. But before the assessment even happens, we typically gather information from parents, teachers, and doctors or other care providers who have been involved in the care of the young person referred to us.

Often, a patient is referred for an assessment because they have a medical condition such as epilepsy and stroke that's known to affect the brain, or they've needed treatment that can affect the brain, as some forms of medication and intervention can. We gather the relevant context and history first, and then carry out

the assessment. From there, we can make recommendations regarding next steps and supports. That might mean speech therapy, occupational therapy, a referral to another health care provider, accommodations at school, cognitive strategies, or mental health supports.

How has investment from the Family of Support partnership helped your work?

It's helped with our biggest concern right now: building our capacity so we can see more patients more quickly. Timely intervention is always important in medical care, but when it comes to developing brains, timing is everything. There are developmental windows where if you can provide the right support at the right time, it sets a person up for long-term success. And if you miss the window, the consequences can be significant. We know we can offer meaningful help once we're able to assess young people and connect them with resources – it's our waiting list that keeps us up at night.

What's an example of an assessment that you think made a big difference?

They all make a difference, really – because typically if someone is referred to us it's because they're struggling in some way. We're generally able to specify appropriate supports that make a positive difference. But to identify

one story: we saw a teenager who had epilepsy. His seizures were affecting his brain and he was struggling in school. His parents knew he was doing everything that was asked of him but he really wasn't learning – he just couldn't make headway in retaining concepts and information. Through our assessment, we were able to do two things. First, we were able to determine the specific nature of his memory challenges; that helps to locate where in the brain there might be a problem as well as provide specific strategies to support his learning and memory. Second, we were able to diagnose a learning disability, which gives teachers and others a clearer path for how to help. With those two pieces of information in hand, his medical team, his family and his school were all much better equipped to support him and help him succeed.



Dr. Julia Young

Year Three: Strong Commitment, Strong Results

\$3,861,652

2022 TOTAL FUNDS RAISED FOR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS THROUGH FAMILY OF SUPPORT: CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

\$1,696,120

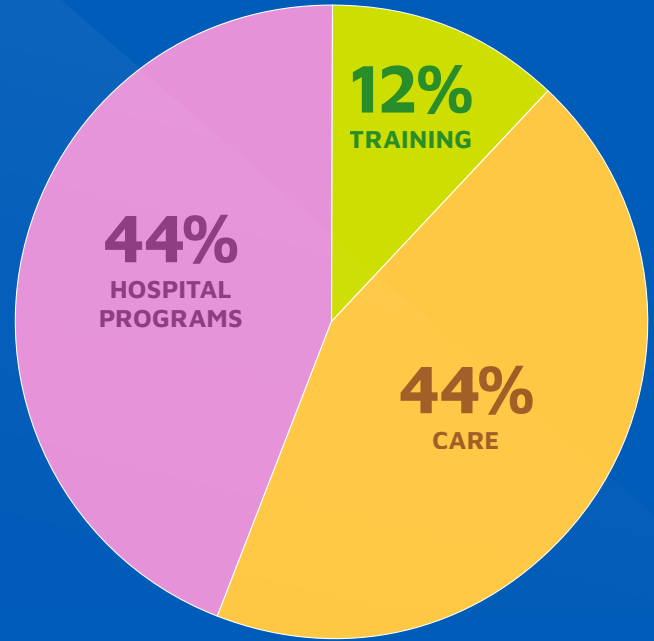
DIRECT DONATIONS TO HOSPITAL PROGRAMS

Distributed across the 13 children's hospital foundations to priority programs at each hospital.

\$2,165,532

LOCAL FUNDRAISING TO CARE AND TRAINING

Directed to the most urgent needs in 2022 identified by the child and youth mental health departments of each hospital.



Even as Canadians navigated inflation and other financial pressures in 2022, they continued to join Empire Company Limited and The Sobey Foundation in investing generously in child and youth mental health. As always, every donated dollar stayed local, helping to support young people and families close to home.



Measures of Impact

Year Three

In Year Three of the Family of Support initiative, some programs established or expanded in early years grew, serving additional patients and families or training additional professionals. In a couple of cases, hospitals added new programs because the activities they had launched in Year One matured and succeeded so quickly that they were able to take on new projects. In still other cases, complex multi-year research and knowledge-mobilization initiatives simply continued along their intended paths, gathering evidence and sharing insights to improve the standard of mental health care for children and youth over time.

Interpreting the Numbers

The scorecard on the following pages will help everyone involved with our partnership track progress over time against the goals we have established together. Even as we strive to make gains on these important measures, it is important to note that there are many factors health care providers, including Canada's 13 children's hospitals, cannot control. The COVID-19 pandemic is a vivid example of a disruption outside hospitals' control. More common factors – from economic upheavals to major policy changes – also affect health care programs. In our reports to the Steering Committee, we will strive to provide useful context and share both quantitative and qualitative measures of impact to provide an accurate picture of successes and challenges.

Member Foundation	Program Name	Year Three			
		Assessments	People Trained	Patients Served	Treatment Spaces
Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation	Mental Health Research 4 Kids ▲			✓	
BC Children's Hospital Foundation	Mental Health Programs Education Strategy ▲			✓	
	Integrated Pain Program – PainCare360 ▲			✓	
Children's Health Foundation	GET-Care Clinic ▲	✓	✓	✓	✓
CHEO Foundation	Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Program (DBT) ■	–	✓	✓	–
	Head to Toe Program (H2T) ■	–	✓	✓	–
	Mental Health Child & Youth Counsellor at Emergency Department 24/7 ■	✓	✓	✓	–
The Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba	Urgent Tele-Mental Health Service ▲	✓		✓	
	PRIME: Partnering for Innovation in Mental Health through eHealth Excellence ▲	✓	✓	✓	
CHU Sainte-Justine Foundation	Innovations in Care and Training ■	✓	–	–	✓
IWK Foundation	The Learning Link ▲		✓	✓	
Janeway Children's Hospital Foundation	Child and Youth Advocacy Centre ■	–	✓	✓	✓
Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation	Mental Health Intensive Care Room ▲	✓	–	✓	✓
	The STC Mobile Health Bus ▲			✓	✓
McMaster Children's Hospital Foundation	I AM SAFE: Suicide Prevention Intervention and Study ▲	✓	✓	✓	
The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation	Family-Based Therapy (FBT) for young people with eating disorders ■	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Centre of Excellence for Adolescent Severe Obesity (CEASO) ▲	✓	✓	✓	–
SickKids Foundation	Neuropsychological Assessments to Support Early Intervention ■	✓	–	✓	–
Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation	Transforming Pediatric Mental Health Care ■	✓	✓	✓	✓

■ Existing Programs Enhancements or Extensions ▲ New Programs or Pilots

YEAR THREE SCORECARD

The table below shows total figures for all hospitals, combining data from diverse programs. The figures show progress in all areas. In two of the four categories – treatment spaces and assessments – children’s hospitals have already exceeded their five-year targets.

Care and Training Totals, All Programs Combined

Family of Support Program Year	Assessments	People Trained	Patients Served	Treatment Spaces
Year One	7,485	313	10,281	10
Year Two	17,567	6,897	16,260	26
Year Three	13,906	2,134	49,433	13
Cumulative Total	38,958	9,344	75,974	49

Assessments

Children’s hospitals continue to expand access to mature assessment practices (such as SickKids’ neuropsychological assessments) as well as new, evidence-based practices (such as CHEO’s H2T program). As of Year Three, we have already exceeded our five-year target for the number of assessments we’d set out to deliver. These assessments play different roles and are tailored to different needs, but all help to connect young people with appropriate supports.

People Trained

Each training can have extensive ripple effects (see Laura Callaghan’s description of this phenomenon on page 16), equipping the trained professional to share knowledge with colleagues and community partners. Moreover, some Family of Support programs – notably the IWK’s Learning Link – involve vital knowledge mobilization work that builds community mental health literacy but is not counted as training in our measurement system. Children’s hospitals are working towards achieving our five-year targets.

Patients Served

Children’s hospitals are working towards achieving our five-year targets. The number of patients children’s hospitals are able to serve has increased substantially as process adaptations (such as diversion clinics) and new targeted programs (such as GET-Care) combine to expand the available care.

Treatment Spaces

As of Year Three, we have exceeded our five-year target for new treatment spaces. What’s more, some new spaces (such as the 10 new rooms at CHU Sainte-Justine) are specially designed to support training and mentorship for mental health teams, meaning that they build capacity for care and training simultaneously.

Care and Training Results in Year Three, by Program

Member Foundation	Program Name	Year Three				Additional Information
		Assessments	People Trained	Patients Served	Treatment Spaces	
Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation	Mental Health Research 4 Kids at the Centre for Child & Adolescent Mental Health ▲			100+		The Centre opened in March 2023.
BC Children's Hospital Foundation	BCCH Mental Health Programs Education Strategy ▲			30,000+		
	Integrated Pain Program - PainCare360 ▲			1,400+		
Children's Health Foundation	Prospect Program (Prodromal Psychosis Service - Early Identification and Intervention for Severe Mental Health Issues) ■	Please see "Patients Served"	0.5 FTE	30	1	
	GET-Care Clinic ▲	Please see "Patients Served"	0.5 FTE	30	1	
CHEO Foundation	Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Program (DBT) ■	—	8	70*	—	*Every assessment completed equals one patient served.
	Head to Toe Program (H2T) ■	—	150	780*	—	*Every assessment completed equals one patient served.
	Mental Health Child & Youth Counsellor at Emergency Department 24/7 ■	1,025	5*	310	—	*There were five official counselors assigned to overnight but with staffing shortages, many different staff members helped to fill gaps due to sickness, etc.
The Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba	Urgent Tele-Mental Health Service ▲	56		56		
	PRIME: Partnering for Innovation in Mental Health through eHealth Excellence ▲	—	—	—		
CHU Sainte-Justine Foundation	Championing Mental Health Care and Training at CHU Sainte-Justine ■	3,438	—	—	2	2 new spaces for a cumulative total of 10 treatment spaces

■ Existing Programs Enhancements or Extensions ▲ New Programs or Pilots

Care and Training Results in Year Three, by Program

Member Foundation	Program Name	Year Three				Additional Information
		Assessments	People Trained	Patients Served	Treatment Spaces	
IWK Foundation	The Learning Link ▲		1,431	4,340		
Janeway Children's Hospital Foundation	Creation of a New Child and Youth Advocacy Centre in Newfoundland and Labrador ■	—	3	35 Families	3	
Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation	Mental Health Intensive Care Room ▲	1,617	—	1,025	2	
	The STC Mobile Health Bus ▲			376	—	
McMaster Children's Hospital Foundation	I AM SAFE Suicide Prevention Intervention and Study ▲	49	3	43 Patients completed the intervention		
The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation	Family-Based Therapy (FBT) for young people with eating disorders ■	104	5	39	—	
	Centre of Excellence for Adolescent Severe Obesity (CEASO) ▲	19	1	48	—	
SickKids Foundation	Neuropsychological Assessments to Support Early Intervention ■	78	—	74	—	
Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation	Transforming Pediatric Mental Health Care In Alberta Emergency Departments ■	7,520	527	10,677	4	

■ Existing Programs Enhancements or Extensions ▲ New Programs or Pilots

On the Horizon

Family of Support investments continue to help hospitals across the country deliver and expand local, evidence-based programs that will make a profound difference in the lives of young people while training the next generation of mental health leaders.

As hospitals race to meet surging demand for mental health care, Canada's Children's Hospital Foundations are deeply grateful for generous investments from The Sobey Foundation and Empire Company Limited that are helping care teams not only keep pace with today's needs but build capacity for early intervention and prevention tomorrow.

We look forward to working alongside you as Family of Support:

- Continues the Healthier Tomorrows Individual Giving Program and the April campaign through which Empire Company Limited matches all one-time donations of \$50 or more for the month of April.
- Sustains the Family of Support 360 Degree Advertising campaign, with tie-ins to important dates and program events.
- Activates another successful in-store donation campaign from September 14th through October 1st, aided by media support before and during the campaign.
- Hosts its popular annual Empire Golf Classic on October 4th, 2023.



FAMILY OF SUPPORT: CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Impact Report Year Three



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