

FAMILY OF SUPPORT: CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Impact Report Year Four



empire
COMPANY LIMITED
**THE SOBEY
FOUNDATION**



**Family
of Support**

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

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“It feels good to be excited about my life again.”

Nève is an active, sociable 17-year-old who has spent time in CHEO’s inpatient mental health crisis unit for anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. She’s thankful for the care she received, noting that therapy and medications both shaped her improvement. She recalls the nurses with particular gratitude. “There are far too many and I’m afraid if I name names, I’ll miss someone,” she says with a laugh. “They really helped me.”



The mental health of children and youth remained an issue of urgent national concern in 2023, animating calls for change across health systems and households. The need for action and investment is clear: an estimated 1.6 million young people in Canada have a mental health disorder.

A December 2023 report commissioned by Children's Healthcare Canada states that, "Investments in children's mental health today, with a focus on accessible and inclusive programming for vulnerable populations, can nurture minds and secure futures for Canadian children and youth and save \$28 billion annually."

It's remarkable to reflect that Family of Support has been mobilized – active, engaged, and invested – for a full four years. Long before the pandemic exacerbated and spotlighted youth mental health concerns, Family of Support was in development, preparing to respond to the intensifying need that parents, educators, and healthcare providers were already observing.

The Sobey Foundation and Empire Company Limited have provided vital resources to the experts and care teams across Canada working urgently to answer what many see as a crisis in youth mental health. In 2023 alone (our most recent reporting year), Family of Support has delivered more than \$4.15 million to mental health initiatives at children's hospitals across the country, including more than \$2.5 million in generous local giving by customers and teammates across 16 Empire banners. In all over the past four years, Family of Support has provided a cumulative total of \$17 million, including \$14 million for mental health programs across Canada's 13 children's hospital foundations and more than \$3 million in local financial and in-kind support.

Critically, you have provided not only generous philanthropic investment but also an exceptional degree of engagement and understanding. Recognizing the complexity inherent in this field, Family of Support placed its trust in Canada's leading youth mental health experts – empowering them to adapt and respond as community needs and clinical realities evolve.

Expanding access to effective practices, part of the Family of Support approach from the outset, is in line with one of the key recommendations of the recent Children's Healthcare Canada report, which calls on federal funders to take "a strategic approach" that "bolster[s] existing programs and services that have already been making a difference in the lives of children and youth." Doing more of what we know makes a positive difference for kids' mental health: our network is proud and grateful to have been empowered to do exactly this for the past four years.

Sustained support and engagement from partners as knowledgeable and engaged as The Sobey Foundation and Empire – especially in an area of intense need and constant change – is invaluable. We remain deeply grateful for your investment and especially for the exceptional quality of your partnership. And we're proud to share, in this report, a window onto some of the important activity you've helped to make possible in 2023.

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

National Overview

A major national partnership involving 13 hospitals and hundreds of experts and care providers, the Family of Support initiative can be summarized in four key measures. The figures below are cumulative totals (2020–2023) connected to programs this vital partnership helps to make possible.

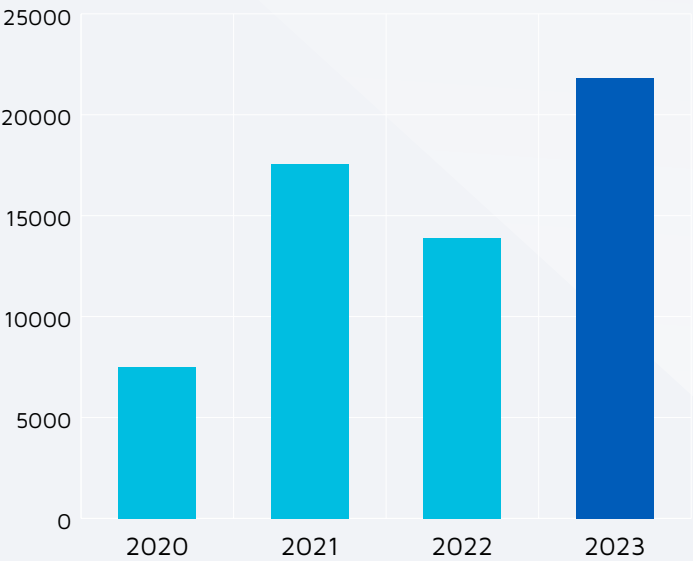
Measure 1 Assessments	Measure 2 People Trained	Measure 3 Patients Served	Measure 4 Treatment Spaces
60,795	12,984	93,183	54
Assessments are the first step toward connecting children and youth with the right support.	From practical guidance for community providers to specialized training for mental health professionals – access to training translates to sound, evidence-based care for kids.	The number of patients served is a powerful gauge of our success in meeting the surging need for mental health care.	Dedicated spaces keep patients and caregivers safe while enabling care and learning.

Why It Matters

These measures quantify four years of progress on well over a dozen child and youth mental health programs across Canada – all chosen for their effectiveness and local relevance. Every intervention captured here is connected to positive impact in the lives of young people navigating mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, or disordered eating, as well as their family, friends, and communities.

Assessments: 60,795

Cumulative Total 2020–2023



Year	Assessments
2020	7,485
2021	17,567
2022	13,906
2023	21,837

Note: The significant year-over-year increase in assessments from 2022 has been driven by a number of factors. The Summit: Marian & Jim Sinneave Centre for Youth Resilience in Alberta, in development for several years, began to receive patients in 2023, moving from 0 assessments in 2022 to 1,344 in 2023. Also this year, the IWK Foundation and Children’s Hospital Foundation of Manitoba allocated Family of Support funds in new ways, supporting more assessments. At six other foundations, assessment numbers increased as existing Family of Support programs grew organically, simply seeing more patients.

What It Means

Assessments are the critical first step in young people’s mental health journeys, when professionals evaluate their needs and connect them with appropriate support. Assessments can include everything from simple intake questionnaires to in-depth neuropsychological evaluations. An assessment may occur when a young person seeks mental health support. In other cases, the care team of a young person with a physical concern may proactively provide a mental health assessment, recognizing that physical issues (illness, injury, treatment) often affect mental health.

Progress to Date

The Family of Support: Child & Youth Mental Health Initiative has helped to enable more than 60,000 assessments to date. In some cases, these assessments are the first stage of a particular mental health program – such as intake at the Mental Health Intensive Care Room at Jim Pattison Children’s Hospital or the Family-Based Therapy (FBT) for young people with eating disorders at Montreal Children’s Hospital. In other cases, the assessments are overlaid on top of other (non-mental health) program areas within the hospital, as is the case in the H2T program below.



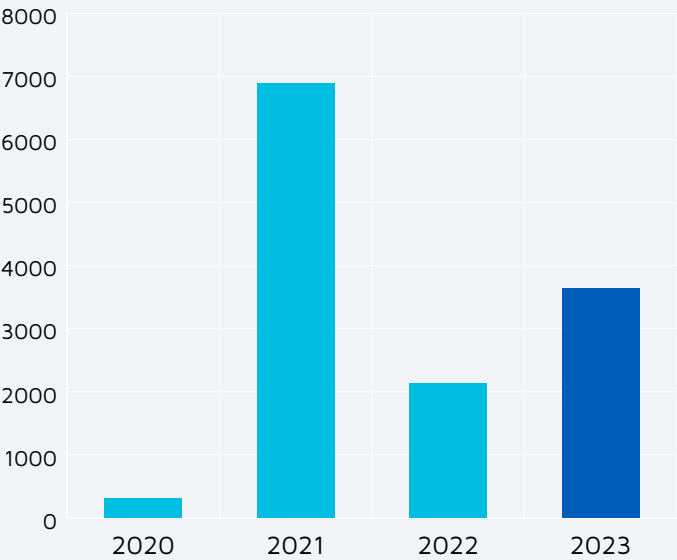
PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Head to Toe (H2T) CHEO

H2T is a suicide screening program for all admitted, inpatient youth aged 12 and older. If a patient answers “yes” to any of the four questions in the validated screening tool, nurses facilitate a timely mental health assessment. H2T responds to evidence that young people who present in the Emergency Department (ED) for physical injuries ostensibly unrelated to mental health may be at elevated risk for suicide. The screening aims to ensure that care teams never miss an opportunity to provide suicide-prevention support when it’s needed.

People Trained: 12,984

Cumulative Total 2020–2023



Year	People Trained
2020	313
2021	6,897
2022	2,134
2023	3,640

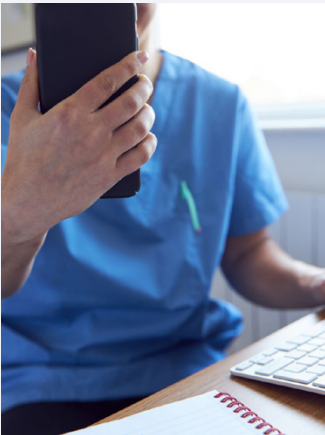
Note: A knowledge mobilization initiative in BC that focused on boosting mental health literacy in the community trained nearly 6,000 people in 2022, causing a spike in this measure. Excluding that spike, growth in the measure – with most funded programs being more in-depth and focusing on professionals – has proceeded more or less stepwise.

What It Means

Young people benefit when those who support them – healthcare providers as well as people like teachers and youth workers – have mental health training. Training lets people working in different care settings more quickly and accurately identify and refer young people with mental health issues. Family of Support-enabled training initiatives have included specialized learning opportunities for professionals as well as offerings that build mental health literacy in community settings.

Progress to Date

Since 2020, Canada’s children’s hospitals, aided by the Family of Support partnership, have trained more than 12,000 professionals – from pediatricians and nurses to social workers and emergency physicians. These efforts have helped professionals expand their knowledge and skills in areas such as trauma-informed care, mental health issues related to migration and settlement, family-based care, and prevention and early intervention.



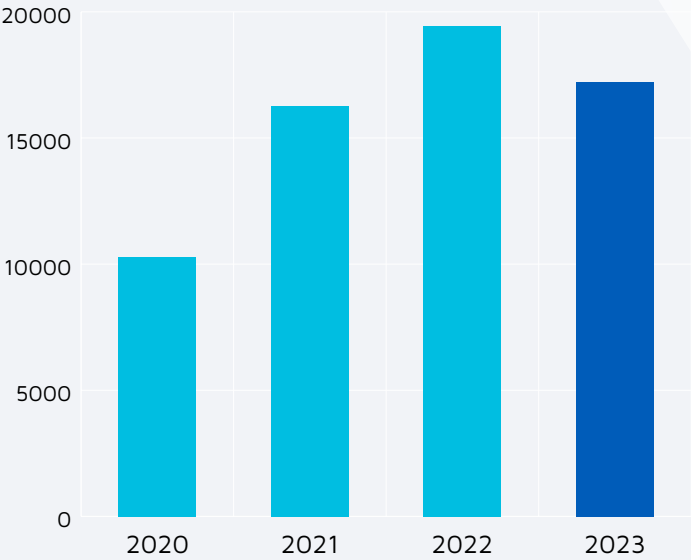
PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Nurse Cross-Training (via the Learning Link) IWK

In 2023, Family of Support funds helped the IWK review and expand its training for nurses providing inpatient care in the Mental Health and Addictions (MHA) program. In recent years, health systems across Canada have been navigating understaffing and other forms of instability. The IWK has worked to build mental health expertise and capabilities across a larger share of the hospital’s nursing staff, to ensure that as staffing configurations change young people facing mental health challenges always have access to the right support.

Patients Served: 93,183

Cumulative Total 2020–2023



Year	Patients Served
2020	10,281
2021	16,260
2022	49,433
2023	17,209

Note: Nearly all programs that work directly with patients reported higher numbers served this year than last year; eight hospitals’ results on this measure increased in 2023. The year-over-year decline in patients served results from a few hospitals shifting their focus – for example, allocating Family of Support funds to training or providing more intensive support to fewer patients. Also, 2022 saw a spike of 30,000 youth served through an online learning resource. Generally speaking, the “patients served” metric captures young people touched by more targeted and sustained supports.

What it Means

The “patients served” measure captures any young person who has directly received mental health care from a program connected to Family of Support. To name just a couple of examples, in 2023 this group has included more than 180 young people who have participated in dialectical behavioural therapy (along with their families) through the Health Sciences Centre Winnipeg’s PRIME (Partnering for Innovation in Mental Health through eHealth Excellence) program, as well as thousands of young people who have presented at emergency departments in mental health crisis.

Progress to Date

The need for mental health care among children and youth across Canada is immense. Family of Support funds are helping hospitals innovate to keep pace and expand access. Since 2020, support from this partnership has helped Canada’s children’s hospitals serve over 93,000 children and youth with mental health concerns. While the partnership’s emphasis is on early intervention and prevention, Family of Support has shown flexibility and pragmatism in supporting upgrades to help hospital emergency departments respond to surging need.



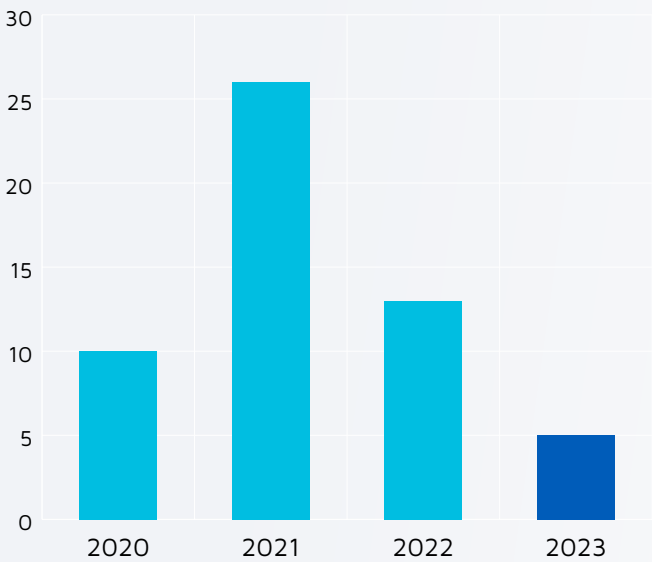
PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Transforming Pediatric Mental Health Care Stollery Children’s Hospital

In northern Alberta, funds from Family of Support have been helping to transform and integrate the Stollery’s mental health offerings to connect the greatest number of young people with the right level of support. This has meant, in part, the addition of social work positions to Stollery mental health teams that have enhanced support available to patients and families during care transition from hospital back home. It’s also meant patients and families are being connected to community-based resources when a hospital admission is not required and alternative community-based mental health support can be provided. Together, these changes free up capacity in the Stollery Emergency for the most serious and urgent needs.

Treatment Spaces: 54

Cumulative Total 2020–2023



Year	Treatment Spaces
2020	10
2021	26
2022	13
2023	5

Note: When Family of Support began, some hospitals immediately chose to allocate funds from the partnership to facility improvements. Generally speaking, those facilities are now in use, benefiting care teams and patients, and the number of hospitals adding new spaces in the latter stages of the partnership has declined.

What It Means

Treatment spaces for mental health help to make young people safe and comfortable while they receive (or await) care. They include regular treatment rooms as well as more specialized facilities such as emergency spaces for kids in crisis and high-tech training and observation rooms.

Progress to Date

Family of Support funds have supported the development of dozens of new treatment spaces and facility upgrades. Funds from the partnership have helped children’s hospitals increase the number of spaces with important safety features for patients, families, and staff. They’ve also enabled facility improvements that help kids benefit from new technologies such as environments designed for calm and comfort, or advanced equipment designed to build skills and resilience.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Saskatoon Tribal Council Mobile Health Fleet Jim Pattison Children’s Hospital Foundation

Jim Pattison Children’s Hospital Foundation works in partnership with the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC), Medavie Health Services West, and the Government of Saskatchewan to support the operation of a small fleet of mobile clinics that bring mental health care to the seven First Nations communities that make up the STC. This community-responsive program added two new treatment spaces in 2023, in the form of two fully equipped and staffed vans. Since its launch in 2021, the STC Mobile Health Fleet has provided mental health support to more than 900 people.

Family of Support 2023

Together, Family of Support and its network contributed a remarkable **\$4,280,859** to child and youth mental health initiatives across Canada this year.

\$4,280,859

\$1,609,772

Direct Donations from The Sobey Foundation and Empire Company Limited

Every children's hospital in Canada has chosen a local, evidence-based mental health initiative as their Family of Support program. Each year, funds contributed by The Sobey Foundation and Empire are distributed across Canada's 13 children's hospitals to support these programs. (See page 13 for a list of Family of Support-funded programs.)

\$2,543,817

Funds Raised Locally by Brands and Teammates

Each year, Empire also leads in-store campaigns across its 16 banners, inviting customers and teammates to lend their support. Every dollar raised locally through in-store contributions to Family of Support stays close to home, going directly to the local children's hospital foundation. Hospitals choose to either invest this money in their Family of Support-funded program or to use it for another mental health initiative related to training or patient care.

Inspired by Our Communities

The Sobey Foundation and Empire are inspired by the engagement and generosity communities across Canada have shown in response to Family of Support. Since the partnership began in 2020, local giving by customers and teammates has delivered more than \$10 million in support for child and youth mental health – an extraordinary amount of support for kids and families when they've needed it most.

Your Growing Impact

Results to Take Pride In

Over the first four years of Family of Support, the partnership has helped Canada's children's hospitals cumulatively add dozens of treatment spaces, train nearly 13,000 mental health professionals and community care providers, and treat and assess more than 150,000 children and youth.

A Closer Look at the Numbers

The output measures themselves are impressive – attesting to remarkable investments, and extraordinary efforts at hospitals across the country – but the ultimate impact of Family of Support is in the difference these interventions are making for children and their families. Impact measurement is complex (and in cases where prevention is the goal, difficult or sometimes even impossible to quantify precisely) but the experts who developed the measurement framework that guides Family of Support expect that the ultimate impact of the output measures laid out in this report are likely to include:

- shorter wait times;
- diminished risk of mental health concerns reaching the point of crisis;
- increased access to effective, evidence-based interventions and;
- higher overall satisfaction with care among young people and their families.



2023 Trends

In 2023, almost all of the 13 children's hospitals supported by Family of Support maintained and advanced programs we've reported on in past years. Funded programs reflect a range of current focus areas in mental health care related to early interventions for children and youth, including:

Integrating Research and Care

Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation and The Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba continued to use partnership funds to advance ambitious research programs that integrate research with care – providing young people with mental health support while expanding clinicians' knowledge.

Intersections of Physical and Mental Health

Meanwhile, BC Children's Hospital Foundation and the CHEO Foundation continued to advance projects at the intersection of mental and physical health. BC's program focuses on pain (which can have significant mental health effects) and CHEO is using a screening test to determine whether young people who present in the emergency department – including with physical complaints – should receive mental health support. (Both programs are described above.)

Connections and Collaboration

Young people facing mental health challenges often benefit when their care teams can connect with others across health systems, community networks, or other services such as the education system. The IWK's Learning Link, for example, delivers training and mobilizes resources across the Maritimes to increase young people's access to evidence-based mental health and addictions support.

93,000+

Since 2020, Family of Support has helped provide access to mental health support for more than 93,000 children and youth through local children's hospitals.

Program Overview

Member Foundation	Program Name	Year Four Assessments	Year Four People Trained	Year Four Patients Served	Year Four Treatment Spaces
Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation	The Summit: Marian & Jim Sinneave Centre for Youth Resilience	✓	—	—	—
BC Children's Hospital Foundation	Integrated Pain Program – PainCare360	—	✓	—	—
Children's Health Foundation	Transition Care Program	—	✓	—	✓
CHEO Foundation	Child and Youth Counsellor (CYC) in Emergency Department	✓	✓	—	—
CHEO Foundation	Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Program (DBT)	✓	✓	✓	—
CHEO Foundation	Head to Toe Program (H2T)	✓	✓	✓	—
The Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba	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 (see note below)	—	—	—	—
Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation	Mental Health Intensive Care Room	✓	—	✓	✓
Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation	The STC Mobile Health Bus	—	—	✓	—
McMaster Children's Hospital Foundation	Pilot Program: Virtual Reality-Supported Cognitive Behavioural Therapy	—	—	✓	—
The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation	Centre of Excellence for Adolescent Severe Obesity (CEASO)	✓	✓	✓	—
The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation	Family-Based Therapy (FBT) for young people with eating disorders	✓	✓	✓	—
SickKids Foundation	Neuropsychological Assessments to Support Early Intervention	✓	—	✓	—
Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation	Transforming Pediatric Mental Health Care	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Funds raised in support of Janeway Children's Hospital Foundation are currently in trust and will be allocated to priority mental health services for children and youth.

Thank You, Family of Support.

Read the CCHF 2023 Annual Report at report.childrenshospitals.ca/cchf-2023 to learn more about the difference your support made for kids' health.



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