



NEWS RELEASE

Mental health association warns of rising tariffs' impact on well-being

(Toronto, Feb. 3, 2025) — As international trade tensions escalate, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario is warning of the significant negative impacts this will bring on Ontarians' mental well-being.

While Ontario's party leaders debate how to combat new tariffs by the U.S. government, studies show the consequences are not just economic. Research shows that economic instability can increase the risk of mental health and addictions issues, including anxiety, depression and substance use. Studies also indicate that people experiencing financial strain are less likely to seek mental health care, worsening the cycle of stress and poor well-being.

Workers in industries affected by the tariffs, including automotive, construction, agriculture, forestry and mining, are especially likely to experience increased strain on their mental health. In the face of these challenges, CMHA Ontario is concerned the community mental health and addictions sector is not equipped for the influx of support that will likely be needed by Ontarians.

"We saw a significant rise in the need for our services after the economic uncertainty brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic," said Camille Quenneville, CEO, CMHA Ontario. "This time around, our sector is already facing critical issues of staff burnout and retention, as well as significant budgetary restraints. Without a comprehensive plan to address the system's health human resource challenges, it'll be difficult for us to provide timely and accessible mental health care for Ontarians."

In the aftermath of the pandemic, CMHA Ontario's polls found the number of people accessing mental health services continue to rise, for years after the initial crisis hit.

CMHA Ontario is calling on all parties to commit to greater investments to ensure that Ontario's critical mental health and addictions workforce can help meet a growing demand for service, as well as additional investments for supportive housing and crisis services.

"We need leadership that considers not only the economic outcomes, but also the social and psychological toll these issues may have on Ontarians," said Quenneville. "Otherwise, we'll see long-term negative impacts to the health of our communities."

FAST FACTS:

- A 2021 study revealed that nearly 60 percent of people who died from opioid toxicity were employed and one-third of these people worked in the construction industry.
- CMHA recommends an investment of \$33 million per year for four years to address health human resource challenges, as well as additional funding to supportive housing and crisis services.



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Ontario

- Research shows that for every dollar invested in covering psychological services in Canada, two dollars is saved for society over the long-term.

About Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario is a not-for-profit, charitable organization funded by the provincial government. We work to improve the lives of all Ontarians through leadership, collaboration and continual pursuit of excellence in community-based mental health and addictions services. Our vision is a society that embraces and invests in the mental health of all people. We are a trusted advisor to government, contributing to health systems development through policy formulation and recommendations that promote positive mental health.

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