CANADIAN ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

ALLIANCE CANADIENNE POUR MALADIE MENTALE ET LA SANTÉ MENTALE

Federal and Provincial Governments Continue to Fail Canadians on Mental Health and Substance Use Health Care

4th Annual CAMIMH Report Card Calls for Urgent Action to Improve Access, Outcomes and Accountability

(OTTAWA, ON) August 26, 2026 – A national survey of more than 4,000 Canadians, sends a clear message: mental health and substance use health care remains difficult to access, wait times are unacceptable, and governments are not delivering on the needed improvements.

In releasing its *4th Annual Report Card on Mental Health and Substance Use Health Care Services*, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) found that for the fourth consecutive year, governments received a **failing grade of F** for mental health care services, while substance use health care fared only slightly better, receiving mostly **D** and **F** grades across the country.

The findings paint a dire picture across the country:

- **84% of all grades were Fs**, while the remaining **16% were Ds**.
- **Canadians in 8 of 9 provinces** gave the federal government an **F** for improving access to mental health care.
- **All provinces received an F** for wait times, achieving parity with physical health care, and evaluating the effectiveness of mental health services.
- Canadians who accessed mental health services in the past year rated the system no more positively than those who had not, suggesting little confidence that care is meeting people's needs.

Despite these results, Canadians believe that meaningful change is possible. **Eighty-seven** percent of Canadians believe timely access to mental health care is important, while **80%** support hiring more mental health care providers to improve access.

"For years, Canadians have told governments that the system is not improving," said Florence Budden, CAMIMH Co-Chair. "Those who need care deserve much better. It is time for urgent action that will improve access to care leading to better health outcomes, while achieving a higher degree of system performance and public accountability."

Canadians continue to report significant barriers to substance use health services. While those who accessed services reported somewhat more positive experiences, public confidence remains low with **predominantly D and F grades**.

More than **two-thirds** of Canadians believe timely access to substance use health services is important, and nearly **seven in ten** believe governments should support education for the health workforce in this area.

"The data does not tell the whole story and underestimates the true need as nine in ten people who could benefit from substance use health care never seek treatment because of stigma," said Anthony Esposti, CAMIMH Co-Chair. "The voice of this majority, silenced by systemic harms, is often missed in the evaluation of care in this sector."

CAMIMH MEMBERS

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists

Canadian Association of Social Workers

Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association

Canadian Federation of Mental Health Nurses

Canadian Medical Association, Office of Public Health

Canadian Mental Health Association

Canadian Psychiatric Association

Canadian Psychological Association

Community Addictions Peer Support Association

Medical Psychotherapy Association Canada

National Network for Mental Health

Psychosocial Rehabilitation Canada

Schizophrenia Society of Canada

The National Initiative for Eating Disorders

CAMIMH Calls for Action
To improve access, outcomes and strengthen system performance and accountability, CAMIMH is calling on:

1. The federal government to pass a ***Mental Health and Substance Use Health Care Parity Act*** as companion legislation to the Canada Health Act;
2. The federal government to establish long-term federal funding for mental health and substance use health care;
3. Provincial and territorial governments to invest a minimum of **12% of health budgets** for mental health and substance use health care services; and
4. All governments to accelerate the development of pan-Canadian performance indicators and public reporting.

The evidence is clear: investing in mental health and substance use health improves health outcomes while strengthening Canada's economy. Governments have an opportunity – and a responsibility to work together to build a system that delivers timely, equitable care for everyone.

Without meaningful action, Canadians will continue to experience unacceptable wait times, unequal access to care and worsening health outcomes – leaving too many people to suffer in silence until their condition reaches a crisis point. A health system that cannot provide timely mental health and substance use health care risks turning treatable conditions into preventable tragedies – for individuals, families, communities and the entire country.

There can be no health without our mental health and substance use health.

The full 2026 CAMIMH Report Card and the accompanying Backgrounder and Report Card Trackers are available:
2026 CAMIMH Report Card, Backgrounder, Mental Health Report Card Tracker, Substance Use Report Card Tracker.

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About CAMIMH
Formed in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is the national voice for mental health in Canada. CAMIMH is a member-driven alliance of 14 mental health and substance use health organizations comprised of people with lived or living experience, their families and caregivers, and health care providers. CAMIMH's mandate is to ensure that mental health and substance use health is placed on the national agenda so that the people of Canada receive timely and appropriate access to care and support.

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