



# Canadian Mental Health Association Windsor-Essex County

*Community well-being is our sole focus.*

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Who would have thought that when we celebrated the start of a new decade on January 1 we would be facing the biggest global challenge of our generation?! The COVID-19 pandemic has presented ALL of us with unprecedented challenges and significant changes to our daily lives. On behalf of everyone at CMHA-WECEB we are most grateful for all of the frontline workers who continue to support our clients despite these challenges.



At CMHA-WECEB we remain committed to supporting those living with mental illnesses and addictions, although the manner in which we deliver our services has changed. The majority of our front-line staff are working from home and supporting their clients via telephone. The CMHA Health Centre remains open and staff continue to see clients regularly. We are taking every precaution to ensure their safety, along with the staff and clients who have a need to visit our branch.

Through our Sole Focus Project we are able to offer FREE webinars for those dealing with heightened anxiety and depression during these unprecedented times. Continue to visit our website and social media channels for regular updates. Unfortunately many of our fundraising events have had to be postponed or rescheduled for 2021. While we are disappointed, we look forward to seeing you at these various events and activities in safer times. In the meantime, I encourage you to #KeepConnected. Now more than ever we need to ensure that we are staying connected with friends and family to support our mental wellness. We are in this together!

Thank you for your ongoing support of CMHA-WECEB. Until we meet again, please be safe.

All the best,

*Claudia den Boer*  
Chief Executive Officer

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## COVID-19: UPDATE ON OUR SERVICES

Deemed an essential service by the Ontario government amid public health concerns related to COVID-19, the Canadian Mental Health Association, Windsor-Essex County Branch (CMHA-WECB) remains open and is ensuring community mental health and addictions supports are safely available by providing programs, services and information online and over the phone as this situation develops.

In accordance with social distancing measures outlined by public health agencies, CMHA-WECB has altered service delivery to protect public health and safety, pivoting services and information sharing to virtual or other means so individuals in need of mental health and addictions supports can continue to get the help they need.

To protect clients and staff while continuing to support the community, CMHA-WECB is providing client services over the phone and is looking at introducing online supports, in addition to those already being offered by [Mental Health Works](#). All events, external meetings and groups have been temporarily suspended. All staff and clients entering either our main branch at 1400 Windsor Ave., or the Crisis & Wellness Centre at 744 Ouellette Ave., must enter through the main/front entrance and will be required to take part in a mandatory screening process.

A reminder to practice physical distancing, wash your hands thoroughly and often, and if you are experiencing a cough or fever, it is best to stay home.

As this public health situation develops, CMHA-WECB will continue to inform clients and the community of further changes to programs and services as they occur. Stay up to date by checking our website or our social media channels often.

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**HDGH and CMHA-WECB OPEN URGENT CARE CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS AS RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

Individuals who need urgent mental health and addictions care now have a new option - they can now be referred, phone or walk into CMHA-WECB for a brief short-term intervention by a multidisciplinary healthcare team.

The initiative is a joint response to COVID-19 and its effects on those suffering from mental health and addictions from Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare (HDGH) and CMHA-WECB. A multidisciplinary team of physicians, nurse practitioner, addictions worker, psychiatrists and social workers will assess, deliver and coordinate the most appropriate care to these individuals.

The Mental Health and Addictions Urgent Care Centre (MHAUUC) will start as a three-month project in response to COVID-19 supporting adults and youth aged 16 years or older who cannot safely wait for community mental health and addiction support. The service is intended for those experiencing a mental health or addictions crisis or who are having an acute and intensive need, at risk of worsening mental health condition that may require hospitalization.

"Pandemics never affect all populations equally. As two organizations leading in mental health care service delivery, our shared vision to a more seamless care experience for our citizens living with mental health and addictions has led to the timely and efficient launch of the MHAUCC as a response to COVID-19," said CMHA-WECB CEO Claudia den Boer who also acts as HDGH's Executive Lead for Community Mental Health. "We are all in a unique situation that has required unique solutions – the MHAUCC is right now one of those solutions."

The goal of the MHAUCC is also to help acute care partners in lessening the burden within emergency departments.

In this way, our acute care system can attend to the many individuals arriving at the hospital for truly acute care needs and/or COVID-19 related medical issues.

"Windsor Regional Hospital is very supportive and happy that this service is moving forward," said Dr. Wassim Saad, WRH Chief of Staff. "It is most definitely in the best interest of our patients and we will work together to make it a success."

Psychiatrists from both HDGH and WRH will roster with the MHAUCC.

Hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 11:30am- 7:30pm and Tuesday, Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm and will be closely monitored based on need.

A person **SHOULD GO TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT** if experiencing:

- Acutely Suicidal thoughts or self-harming behaviour
- Substance related Intoxication
- Acute Psychosis
- Possible medical issues
- Severe alcohol dependency
- Aggressive or violent behaviour with risk to others

More information is available on both the CMHA-WECB and HDGH websites. Self-referral, physician and healthcare provider referrals are accepted. Individuals can also walk-in to the MHAUCC during hours of operation or call 519-257-5111 if they have questions whether to attend.

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Getting and staying connected during this coronavirus pandemic is critical. Our recently launched #KeepConnected campaign highlights ways to stay connected and offers suggestions and tips for the community to utilize and share.

CMHA-WECB is hosting webinars on timely topics in an effort to support those who are experiencing heightened anxiety, distress and loneliness. But we also want to celebrate the good news, the ways in which people are connecting and while in crisis, find ways we can access some mindset tools as well.

The hashtag #KeepConnected is a way to collaborate, share and to promote social connections at such a crucial time. Visit our website for a list of ideas to share.

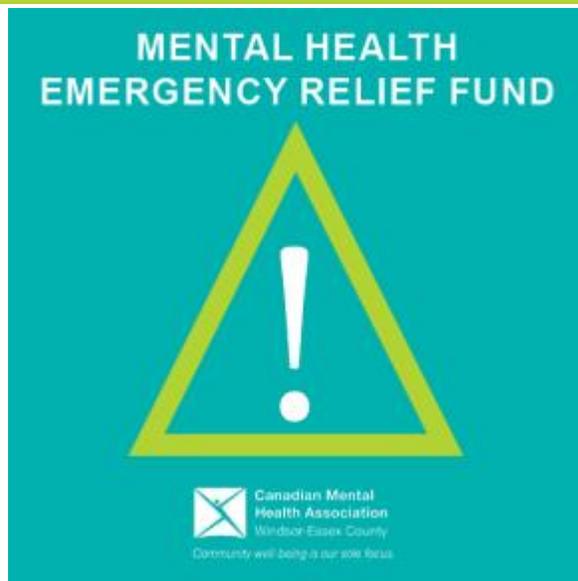
With growing numbers of COVID-19 cases and subsequent deaths, demand for the local CMHA Bereavement Program will increase significantly. In addition to "normal" grief experienced after the death of a loved one, this current pandemic will impart significant trauma: Loved ones not able to be there for those final moments to say good-bye; families and friends without an opportunity to take part in funeral services and other rites of passage; and finally, reduced services from organizations like ours.

We are concerned how we will fund programs to address this need based on losing so many of our event-based opportunities – as well as the impact on our overall economy.

CMHA receives **no** government funding for bereavement, mental health education or our Client Assistance Fund. Over the last several years we have developed a strong, robust fundraising program in support of these programs. The pandemic has hit us hard financially at a time when we are also facing increasingly high requests for outreach, webinars and support – and our prevention programs that we now need to reduce impact on ERs, clinics and crisis lines.

CMHA-WECB is responding in several ways:

A **NEW** position has been created, the *Pandemic Response Therapist*, who will utilize an evidence-based approach to identify those individuals experiencing, or at risk of experiencing anxiety, trauma and/or grief, including complicated grief. This position will allow us to service more people in Windsor-Essex County during this unprecedented time in our history.



We are offering webinars at no charge to the community and manufacturing sector – using our current donations. Normally there is a nominal fee to recover staffing costs for our education/trainings. As the lead community mental health and addictions provider, we stepped up immediately to help.

We are using social media and our CMHA website to provide tools and resources to assist those struggling. In addition, local media are helping share information about mental health tips during these uncertain times.

Immediate action is necessary as this pandemic spreads at record pace. Dr. Roger McIntyre from the University of Toronto said, "**The immediate fallout can manifest in increased rates of addiction and depression. Research out of the Great Depression and other economic downturns, found that a one-per-cent increase in the unemployment rate resulted in a one-per-cent uptick in the rate of suicides.**" If you would like to support this initiative, [click here](#) and select COVID Emergency Relief Fund in the gift designation drop down.

## EVENTS UPDATE



[Go Green Golf Tournament](#) – September 28

[Wake Up, Speak Up](#) – September 30

[A Night of Wellness for Women](#) – October 15



Jeff Burrow's 24-Hour Drum-a-thon (scheduled for May), cancelled until 2021

Corporate Challenge (scheduled for June 20), cancelled until 2021

A Night with Gatsby (scheduled for June 26), cancelled until 2021

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[Donate Now](#)

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**Canadian Mental Health Association  
Windsor-Essex County Branch**

Main Office:  
Monday - Friday: 8:30am - 4:30pm



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