



Received Jun 07 2019  
MOH Office

June 7, 2019

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
Hepburn Block, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Elliott:

**Re: Public Mental Health – Parity of Esteem Position Statement**

I am very pleased to highlight for you the recent decision of the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts to formally adopt the [Parity of Esteem Position Statement](#). The Position Statement asserts that public health equally values mental and physical health.

The Parity of Esteem Position Statement is in direct alignment with Bill 116 in its recognition that mental health is an essential element of health. We are very enthusiastic about the provisions within Bill 116 to establish a Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence and to implement a mental health and addictions strategy with sustained commitment from all sectors and levels of government. Please be assured that the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts is a committed local partner in this important work.

At its meeting on May 16, 2019, the Board of Health carried the following resolution #15-19:

*WHEREAS* the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts recognizes that there is no health without mental health; and

*WHEREAS* Public Health Sudbury & Districts intentionally adopts the term, public mental health, to redress the widespread misunderstanding that public health means public physical health;

**Sudbury**

1300 rue Paris Street  
Sudbury ON P3E 3A3  
t: 705.522.9200  
f: 705.522.5182

**Rainbow Centre**

10 rue Elm Street  
Unit / Unité 130  
Sudbury ON P3C 5N3  
t: 705.522.9200  
f: 705.677.9611

**Sudbury East / Sudbury-Est**

1 rue King Street  
Box / Boîte 58  
St.-Charles ON P0M 2W0  
t: 705.222.9201  
f: 705.867.0474

**Espanola**

800 rue Centre Street  
Unit / Unité 100 C  
Espanola ON P5E 1J3  
t: 705.222.9202  
f: 705.869.5583

**Île Manitoulin Island**

6163 Highway / Route 542  
Box / Boîte 87  
Mindemoya ON P0P 1S0  
t: 705.370.9200  
f: 705.377.5580

**Chapleau**

101 rue Pine Street E  
Box / Boîte 485  
Chapleau ON P0M 1K0  
t: 705.860.9200  
f: 705.864.0820

**Toll-free / Sans frais**

1.866.522.9200

[phsd.ca](http://phsd.ca)



*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT* the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts endorse the Public Mental Health - Parity of Esteem Position Statement, May 16, 2019; and

*FURTHER THAT* copies of this motion and position statement be forwarded to local and provincial partners including all Ontario boards of health, Chief Medical Officer of Health, local MPPs, Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA), local municipalities and Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM).

Officially adopting parity of esteem reinforces new, current and ongoing work which has been identified in our [Public Mental Health Action Framework](#). The Framework is action-oriented and provides the roadmap for interventions, articulating our commitment to concepts and investments to improve mental health opportunities for all throughout the Public Health Sudbury & Districts service area.

Our local public health work in mental health will be more sustainable and effective if it is supported by organizational and provincial policies and structures that acknowledge mental health as an explicit goal along with physical health.

Yours sincerely,



Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

Enclosure (1)

cc: All Ontario Boards of Health  
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
Mr. Jamie West, MPP, Sudbury  
Ms. France Gelin, MPP, Nickel Belt  
Mr. Michael Mantha, MPP, Algoma-Manitoulin  
Ms. Pageen Walsh, Executive Director, Ontario Public Health Association  
Ms. Loretta Ryan, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Constituent Municipalities within Public Health Sudbury & Districts  
Ms. Alison Stanley, Executive Director, Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities

# Position Statement

## Parity of Esteem

### Position Statement

The Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts actively supports the concept of parity of esteem, which is defined as equally valuing mental and physical health, for the wellbeing of all in our community. We will intentionally utilise the term public mental health to acknowledge mental health as an explicit goal in addition to the goal for physical health and well-being.

To advance mental health opportunities for all throughout the Public Health Sudbury & Districts service area, the Board further commits to:

- Ensuring that public mental health practice be relevant for everyone, regardless of mental illness diagnoses, with appropriate adaptations,
- Understanding mental health from a social determinants of health perspective and to working to improve equity in mental health,
- Understanding and shining a light on systemic and often hidden prejudice in support of opportunities for mental health for all,
- Privileging the voices of those with lived experiences and their families and carers, and
- Informing our public mental health practice with the aspiration to build hope, empowerment, and resilience in individuals and communities.

### Background

Like physical health, mental health and well-being are influenced by the social, economic, and physical environments in which people work, live, and play. We also know that populations with socio-economic disadvantages are disproportionately affected by mental health problems and challenges.

People who experience mental illness and addictions are more likely to die prematurely than the general population. Mental illness can cut 10 to 20 years from a person's life expectancy. The disease burden of mental illness and addiction in Ontario is 1.5 times higher than all cancers put together and more than seven times that of all infectious diseases. This

includes years lived with less than full function and years lost to early death. ,

The 2018 Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) identifies mental health in its mandate. Local public health must address mental health, focusing on mental health promotion, prevention, and early identification and referral. Within OPHS, the role of public health "is to support and protect the physical and mental health and well-being, resiliency and social connectedness of the health unit population . . . reaching all . . . with a special focus on those with greater risk of poor health outcomes".

Public Health Sudbury & Districts supports the concept of parity of esteem, or equally valuing mental and physical health. We support the assertion that our work in mental health will be more sustainable and effective if it is supported by organizational policies that acknowledge mental health as an explicit goal, while recognizing that it is also fundamental to physical health and well-being. There is no health without mental health.

The Public Mental Health Action Framework is Public Health Sudbury & Districts' roadmap that will assist us in putting into practice parity of esteem. The goals and outcomes for public mental health are and will be overarching and cross sectoral within our responsibilities. As outlined in the Framework, we will need to be intentional in our current work, in identifying how to further leverage what we are already doing and systematically identify new areas for public mental health initiatives. There is a role for everyone.

## Commitments of Public Health

Our Public Mental Health Action Framework articulates our five commitments to concepts and investments to improve mental health opportunities for all throughout the Public Health Sudbury & Districts service area.

1. **Mental Health for All:** Public Health Sudbury & Districts is committed to ensuring that public mental health practice be relevant for everyone, regardless of mental illness diagnoses, with appropriate adaptations. Mental health and mental illness are distinct but related concepts. These concepts intersect and coexist in individuals and populations. Persons with serious mental illness or addiction can experience good mental health. Persons with no mental illness or addiction can experience poor mental health or difficulty coping.
2. **Social Determinants of Mental Health:** Public Health Sudbury & Districts is committed to understanding mental health from a social determinants of health perspective and to working to improve equity in mental health. The social determinants of mental health are understood to be the same as those determining physical health. They are the societal factors that underpin and drive individual-level risk and protective factors for disease.
3. **Anti-stigma and Discrimination:** Public Health Sudbury & Districts is committed to understanding and shining a light on systemic and often hidden prejudice in support of opportunities for mental health for all. Many who live with mental health and addictions problems have reported experiencing discrimination at work, from family and friends, within imagery found in the media, while attempting to secure housing, within health services or the justice system. Living with mental health problems or addictions can be accompanied by self-stigma and shame that is further reinforced by societal reactions. ,
4. **Voices of People with Lived Experience:** Public Health Sudbury & Districts is committed to privileging the voices of those with lived experiences and their families and carers. This will take place through collaboration with people with lived experience, connections with family and carers, transparency and accountability.
5. **Hope, Belonging, Meaning and Purpose:** Public Health Sudbury & Districts is committed to informing our public mental health practice with the aspiration to build hope, empowerment, and resilience in individuals and communities. This commitment draws us to understand and support mental health from a more holistic and community-based perspective. A perspective that considers mental wellness equally with physical, spiritual, and emotional wellness. We acknowledge the perspective of The First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework.

## References

1. Chesney, Goodwin and Fazel (2014). Risks of all-cause and suicide mortality in mental disorders: a meta-review. *World Psychiatry*, 13: 153-60.
2. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (2018). Mental Illness and Addiction: Facts and Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/the-crisis-is-real/mental-health-statistics>
3. Ratnasingham et al. (2012). Opening eyes, opening minds: The Ontario burden of mental illness and addictions. An Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences / Public Health Ontario report. Toronto: ICES.
4. National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. (2014). Defining a population mental health framework for public health. Retrieved from [http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2014\\_SanteMentale\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2014_SanteMentale_EN.pdf)
5. Keleher, H., Armstrong, R. "Evidence-based mental health promotion resource." Report for the Department of Human Services and VicHealth, Melbourne (2005). Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236672093\\_Evidence-Based\\_Mental\\_Health\\_Promotion\\_Resource](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236672093_Evidence-Based_Mental_Health_Promotion_Resource)
6. Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2007). Improving the health of Canadians: exploring positive mental health. Retrieved from [https://www.cihi.ca/en/improving\\_health\\_canadians\\_en.pdf](https://www.cihi.ca/en/improving_health_canadians_en.pdf)
7. Shim, R., Koplan, C., Langheim, F. J., Manseau, M. W., Powers, R. A., & Compton, M. T. (2014). The social determinants of mental health: An overview and call to action. *Psychiatric annals*, 44(1), 22-26.
8. Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. (2011). Open minds, healthy minds: Ontario's comprehensive mental health and addiction strategy. Retrieved from [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/mental\\_health2011/mentalhealth\\_rep2011.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/mental_health2011/mentalhealth_rep2011.pdf)
9. Faculty of Public Health and Mental Health Foundation. "Better Mental Health for All. A Public Health approach to mental health improvement." (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.fph.org.uk/media/1644/better-mental-health-for-all-final-low-res.pdf>