

If you only read the headlines, you'll miss the full scope of the problem. While mental illness, including addictions, has become more top of mind for the media and Canadians in general over the past few years, it's fair to say that most people still don't have a true understanding of just how big, onerous, and potentially damaging the crisis really is—on both a societal and personal level. The numbers simply don't lie.

### **It's a Global Problem, and We Are Not Immune**

According to the World Health Organization, around 450 million people currently struggle with mental illness, making it the leading cause of disability worldwide. Here at home, it affects more than 6.7 million of us. In fact, one in two Canadians have—or have had—a mental illness by the time they reach 40 years of age. Alarming statistics like this only underscore the need for all of us to [\*\*get involved\*\*](#) in one way or another.

### **The Cost to Society Is Immense**

Mental illness is a leading cause of disability in this country, preventing nearly 500,000 employed Canadians from attending work each week. To make matters worse, the cost of disability leave as a result of mental illness is about double the cost of leave due to physical illness. All in, the economic burden of mental illness in Canada is an estimated \$51 billion per year including health care costs, lost productivity and reductions in health-related quality of life.

### **The Human Cost Is Even Greater**

Most people don't think of mental illness as something you can die from. At least not in the same way that people die from cancer, heart disease or diabetes. Yet the inter-relationship between addictions and other forms of mental illness, and their connection to physical health, is undeniable. Here again, the numbers are all too real.

- Opioid overdoses now account for more deaths in Canada than automobile accidents.
- The World Health Organization estimates one person dies by suicide every 40 seconds.
- Over 4,000 Canadians die by suicide every year—an average of 11 per day.

- People with mood disorders are at much higher risk of developing a long-term medical condition.
- People with mental illness are two times more likely to have a substance use problem versus the general population.
- People with mental illness and addiction are more likely to die prematurely versus the general population.
- Tobacco addiction is the leading cause of premature mortality in Canada.

## **Access to Services Is a Major Barrier**

**75%**

### **of children with mental disorders do not have access to specialized treatment services.**

While mental illness accounts for about 10 per cent of the burden of disease in Ontario, it receives just seven per cent of health care dollars. This shortfall, totalling almost \$1.5 billion, creates an ever-widening gap in the system's ability to deliver timely intervention and adequate long-term care.

- Only half of Canadians experiencing a major depressive episode receive "potentially adequate care."
- One-third of Canadians aged 15 or older who report having a need for mental health care say those needs were not fully met.
- 75 per cent of children with mental disorders do not have access to specialized treatment services.
- Aboriginal youth are about five to six times more likely to die by suicide than non-Aboriginal youth. Suicide rates for Inuit youth are among the highest in the world, at 11 times the national average.

## **Making Mental Health a Canadian Priority**

CAMH has a mandate to raise awareness, influence public policy and drive social change. These efforts are only possible because of our clinical, research and educational

excellence and evidence-based approach to advocacy. But we all have a stake in the crisis, and your voice is as important, if not more so, than ours.

We need your support to change the status quo and create hope for all Canadians. You can help people understand **the truth about Stigma**. You can **become a Change Agent** by donating monthly. Or you can just make it your mission to help those around you understand that Mental Health *is* Health. And that we can do something about it.