



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
La santé mentale pour tous



years of
community
ans dans la
communauté

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) National 2021 Annual General Meeting (AGM) Chair's Report

2021 has been an exciting year for CMHA. As individuals, families, and communities continue to learn to live with the reality of a pandemic, CMHA has risen to the task of setting some key strategic initiatives and has continued to be a leading voice in the mental health ecosystem across Canada.

CMHA has had a major influence on several significant issues this year. I suggest you all take a look at our Impact report Transformations. To highlight just a few items, we have worked closely with our federal government and mental health partners. As a result over 1 billion dollars has been allocated for mental health services across the country to provide support for mental health during Covid-19. We appeared at the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs regarding the Medical Assistance in dying (MAID) as it related to mental health and continue to be part of an expert committee to recommend the implementation of this legislation. Mental Health Week was again an astounding success with over 650,000 downloads to our tool kit #GetReal trended in the top spots in Canada.

This past year we launched our Nationwide Strategic Plan - OUR TIME IS NOW. We reached out to as many people as possible to gain a clear sense of direction. Our vision is a Canada that sees mental health as a universal human right. Our strategic objectives include modernizing our organizational structure, nurturing a healthy culture, assuring that all Canadians have access to community health-based services, and assuming a strong voice for social and systems change.

I want to take this opportunity to talk about the staff, our board of directors, and our partners.

Margaret Eaton joined CMHA as CEO in January 2020. She took on the very difficult task of getting the administrative structure and the finances under control. You will see as this annual meeting unfolds, her vision of leadership focused on kindness and excellence, has had a direct impact on the very positive end to this fiscal year. On behalf of all of the Board of Directors and in particular myself, I want to thank you Margaret for your accomplishments. They are a benefit not only to the national office but to the entire federation.

Despite the demands of working virtually, the staff must be commended for their resilience and dedication throughout this challenging year. Our job on the board of directors would be impossible without Kelly Puddister. Thank you Kelly for being the anchor to the governance of CMHA. Keeping us on top of our dossiers, orchestrating complex meeting schedules, contributes greatly to our accomplishments.

CMHA would not be what it is today without our growing number of partners, stakeholders and supporters. The list is at the end of this annual report. Families remembering CMHA at a time of loss, the growing understanding amongst the private business sector around the importance of mental health, concerned citizens, Ride don't Hide, have contributed to a very fruitful year-end financially.

Looking ahead to next year, CMHA envisages being an even stronger voice to the federal government. Mental health has been a key issue in the past federal election. We plan to keep it



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that way. Our vision of Mental Health as a Universal Human Right provides us with the vision, and our strategic plan, Our Time is Now, with the directives.

Joy Bacon, the past president, in her report last year, emphasized the positive spirit of collaboration that has emerged across our federation. I have tried to contribute to enhancing this dynamic and I am committed to taking it even further. For the first time this year, we organized a virtual federation-wide governance meeting with the chairs and vice-chairs of CMHA Divisions. This allowed us to share our governance challenges and learn from each other. More of this kind of initiative will surely contribute to building strength in CMHA. To be a robust federation, we need to look at our governance structure through an equity lens. This means asking some difficult questions regarding power dynamics, gender, language, culture, inclusivity. The "time is now" for this as well.

Last, of all, I sincerely want to thank all of the members of the board. Your work on the various committees and the board have been key to our end-of-year success. I look forward to working with you and with the new incoming board members.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Hetherington