

Topic Overview

Defining the Mental Health and Addictions 'Basket of Core Services' to be Publicly Funded in Ontario

Citizen panel
26 July 2016

The McMaster Health Forum convened a citizen panel on the subject of defining the mental health and addictions 'basket of core services' to be publicly funded in Ontario. The panel was organized with the support of the Government of Ontario and the Ontario SPOR Support Unit (OSSU). The panel brought together 15 citizens from across the region covered by the Central, Central West, Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant, and Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Networks to examine the problem, options for addressing it, and key implementation considerations. The purpose of the panel was to guide the work of the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Council in defining a basket of core mental health and addictions services for Ontario.

Discussing the problem

Participants identified four challenges in the current delivery of mental health and addictions services: 1) a lack of prioritization of mental health and addictions; 2) a lack of access to needed services; 3) a system that is not designed to address the broad range of mental health and addictions issues in Ontario; and 4) individuals experiencing mental health and/or addictions problems facing stigma both in the community and from health professionals.



The views expressed in the panel summary are the views of panel participants and should not be taken to represent the views of McMaster University, the Government of Ontario, the Ontario SPOR Support Unit (OSSU), or the authors of the panel summary.





Fifteen citizens from across the region covered by the Central, Central West, Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant, and Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Networks gather during a McMaster Health Forum event on 26 July 2016.

Discussing the options

When asked if they would support the creation of a basket of core services, participants were divided on whether a basket was sufficiently flexible to meet individual needs. In deliberating about elements 1 and 2, participants stressed the need for services that provide access to clear and easy-to-understand information, and that assist individuals in navigating where and when they should seek care. For element 3, there was agreement on the importance of services addressing the social determinants of health, with an emphasis on greater coordination between health and social services and better access to housing, employment and income supports for those with mental health and/or addictions problems. In relation to all three elements, several value-related themes emerged with some consistency: 1) evidenced-based (that services chosen for the basket are backed-up by the best available research); 2) comprehensiveness (that services included in the basket address the needs of all Ontarians); 3) accessibility (that individuals know where

to go to receive care and face few barriers in their efforts to seek care); and 4) coordination (increased levels of coordination between health professionals and between health and social services).

Discussing the implementation considerations

Throughout the deliberations participants identified four factors to consider before implementing the basket of core services: 1) decision-makers should ensure that the basket of core services is sufficiently comprehensive to address the needs of the whole population, across each of the three elements; 2) decision-makers should consider alternative models of delivery and settings for care to those being used now, including online or late-night services; 3) a mechanism for continuous innovation and assessment should be built into the process to ensure that core services are updated as new evidence and models of care become available; and 4) changes should be clearly communicated to the public.

Panel deliverables

To learn more about this topic, consult the [citizen brief](#) that was presented to participants before the panel and the [summary](#) of the panel. For an electronic copy of the citizen brief or panel summary, visit our website www.mcmasterhealthforum.com