

# 2018/2019



## Message from Geoff Quirt : Outgoing Board Chair

My term as chair of the Board of Directors ends this June so I would like to take this opportunity to reflect back on my time in that role, focusing on the two major milestones reached by ConnexOntario during my tenure: the introduction of ConnexCentral, and the move to “One Number.”

After months of development work, ConnexCentral – an array of tools linking to a redesigned database – was put through its paces. Deployment allowed the organization to begin collecting data to gauge client satisfaction with the addictions and mental health services sector – only one addition to an expanded capacity made possible by ConnexCentral.

We also saw ConnexOntario move to “One Number,” with Ontarians being able to access our services by calling one toll-free number or by visiting one website instead of three. This change has been a positive one allowing us to re-think our marketing strategy. Promoting the organization as ConnexOntario allows us to streamline marketing efforts and to shine an equal light on all three of our primary service areas: addictions, mental health, and problem gambling. An integrated media plan is underway, developed with the assistance of Postmedia, which includes print, Facebook, YouTube, and Spotify advertising.

On a less positive note, ConnexOntario posted its first operating deficit and much effort was devoted to rectifying that situation. We met with staff of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to inform them of the deficit recovery plan we had developed.

They thanked us for our transparency and endorsed the recovery plan.

With the elimination of the deficit, ConnexOntario enters fiscal 2019/20 with a healthy operating surplus. Over the past two years, our relationship with the ministry has improved due to more frequent face-to-face communication and collaborative work in planning for our agency’s future.

ConnexOntario, like every other publicly funded entity, has watched closely as platforms were developed and

provincial political parties campaigned for voter support. The change in government has ushered in a new era in our sector and Bill 74, The People’s Health Care Act 2019, reinforces that we are operating in a rapidly changing environment. Work that has been done in the past year by the Organizational Ethics and Values Committee will be critical as we work to articulate our current and future role to a whole new set of players in our world.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to my fellow board members for their generous support during my tenure as chair, and to recognize the great work done by the staff of ConnexOntario that keeps us relevant in these changing times.

## Message from Brad Davey : Executive Director

Fiscal 2018-19 saw Connex working hard to recover from a deficit incurred in the previous year. A collective show of restraint, and the careful stewardship of Lorri Lowe and Maggie Knelsen, returned us to a position of financial good health. The need to recover from the deficit, however, did not prevent Connex from making progress in several areas.

A dedicated team of staff, led by Nerin Kaur, has been working to develop a new mobile app and Mindyourmind criss-crossed Canada working on a project with the Federal government. As well, work has been done on the development of a new IT plan that will ensure the sustainability of systems at Connex for the coming years.

Anyone who has been working in the health sector for long knows the profound effect that an election resulting in a change of government can have on the system. The recent creation of the Ontario Health Corp. and coming Ontario Health teams are certainly going to change the health world as we have known it. One indicator of how much movement there is in our sector is the fact that over 20,000 data reports were generated from the ConnexOntario database in the last fiscal year.

A new data sharing partnership with the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health has exposed Connex to a new audience of users. Our marketing campaign with Postmedia promises to do that as well. Going forward, we will be seeking out similar partnerships and adjusting to the constantly changing landscape in our sector.



## Organizational Ethics and Values

In 2018, the Organizational Ethics and Values Committee (OEV) updated the mission, vision, and values statements for ConnexOntario achieving this through a survey sent to staff and Board of Directors.

To provide consistency in its approach, the OEV committee created both a statement of ethical principles and an ethical decision-making framework to aid in studying issues brought forward to the committee. These tools will be used to make recommendations to the Board of Directors.

The OEV is co-chaired by Tricia Korbut and Valerie Johnston – and comprised of staff from ConnexOntario and mindyourmind, Board members, and management.

## IGNITE Your Culture



Spearheaded by Lorri Lowe, ConnexOntario has engaged workplace culture specialist Carol Ring to aid our team in igniting a positive, productive, and sustainable corporate culture unique to ConnexOntario that ensures an alignment with our values.

Staff and senior leadership have engaged in several focus groups and working sessions to develop Carol's concepts further.



**92%**

Live Answer Rate



**95.3%**

Validations Completed\*

(\*Q1-Q3)



**98.5%**

Programs Compliant with Information\*\*

(\*\*Q1-Q3)

**3640**

addiction and mental health programs/services

**472**

organizations

**1604**

sites

## Mission Statement

The professionals at ConnexOntario provide free, confidential, and personalized responses 24/7/365 to individuals about mental health, addictions, and problem gambling services throughout the province. Another critical role for ConnexOntario is the provision of customized data to those who request access to quality systems information.

## Marketing Update

ConnexOntario has continued its rebranding efforts following the move to one number. To reinforce the new branding, conference displays have been updated and an assortment of “swag” has been acquired and a public pamphlet is in development.

Early in 2019, Postmedia was brought on board to assist with ConnexOntario’s digital marketing and social media presence and a well-received video was developed with the assistance of Betty-Lou Kristy, Director of the Centre for Innovation in Peer Support.



## Mobile App



For the past several months, in order to make our services even more accessible to the public, a team of ConnexOntario staff worked on the development of a new mobile app – ConnexGO.

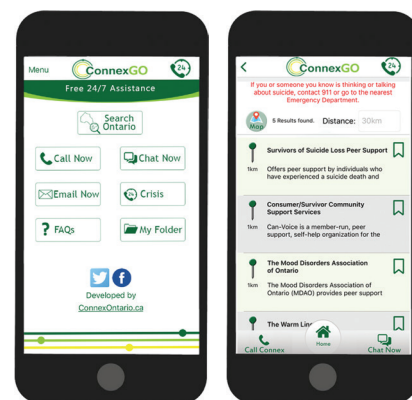
Formatted for Android and iOS, the app will provide on the go, guided navigation to mental health, substance use, and problem gambling services within Ontario. Users will be able to search for a variety of services by answering a short questionnaire, or by contacting our Information and Referral Specialists via phone, chat, or email.

ConnexGO will direct users to 24/7 crisis services based on their geographical location.

As well, users will be able to access service details such as description, referral information, location, phone number, hours of operation, and more.

Key functionalities available on ConnexGO:

- Search for mental health, substance use, and problem gambling services in the surrounding area.
- Call, email or chat with an Information and Referral Specialist.
- Access crisis service information in the surrounding area.
- Save search results to access at a later date.
- Access other helpful information from our library.



## Vision Statement

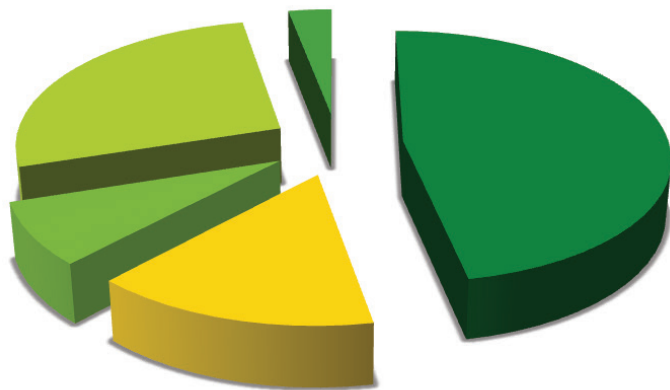
An Ontario where everyone can access information about the healthcare and social support services they need, at the right time, and at the right place.

# Update from Information & Referral Services

ConnexOntario's System Navigators handled almost 96,000 contacts in fiscal 2018/19.

The number of calls, web chats, and emails from persons in crisis continues to increase with more than 1,800 contacts coming from persons at risk of harming themselves or others. This total included 573 'exceptional contacts' - many of which required involving 911, police, and/or other emergency medical services.

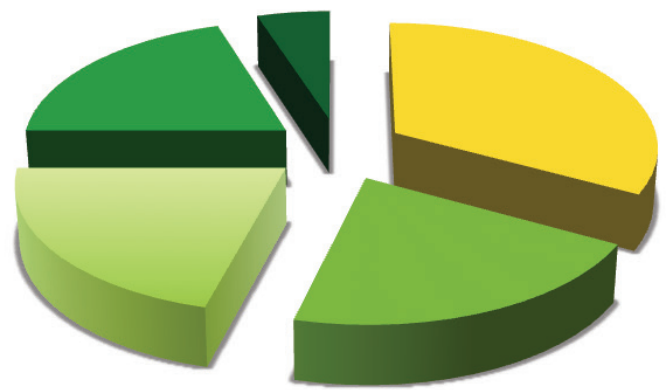
**Contact Reason: Substance Use**



Alcohol	47%
Stimulants*	27%
Opioids	15%
Cannabis	8%
Other	3%

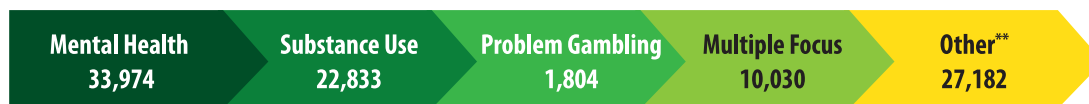
\* (including Methamphetamines)

**Contact Reason: Mental Health**



Not diagnosed	33%
Depressive disorders	21%
Other	21%
Anxiety Disorder	20%
Schizophrenia Spectrum/ Psychotic Disorders	5%

## Primary reason for contacting ConnexOntario



\*\* (including mis-directed and hang-ups)

**92%** of contacts live-answered

## Values Statement

We value:

**Client –centred service:** An approach to service delivery that recognizes and responds to the needs of our clients as unique individuals.

**Responsiveness:** A commitment to adapting as required in light of changing circumstances

**Excellence:** A commitment to upholding the highest quality service delivery and ethical standards.

**Staff as our most important asset:** A belief that excellence is only achieved in a healthy working environment.

## Update from Data, Product, and Project Management (DPPM)

ConnexOntario has had data-sharing partnerships in place with several LHINs for years. In addition, in 2018, we partnered with the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health to link our service data to their public website. DPPM has also been working to create a data sharing agreement with the branch of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that houses the Mental Health Data and Digital Strategy Project.

Full access to the ConnexOntario database was granted to several staff from the Office of the Auditor General as they conducted an audit of publicly funded addictions programs. Of the personalized information requests (custom searches and reports) generated by ConnexOntario in 2018/19, 21% came from government including the MOHLTC, the Auditor General of Ontario, MCYS, MPs, and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

### Reports



**18,844**

self-service requests  
(eServices, Forensic Bed Registry, DirectConnex)



**4,173**

web service requests  
(datasharing)

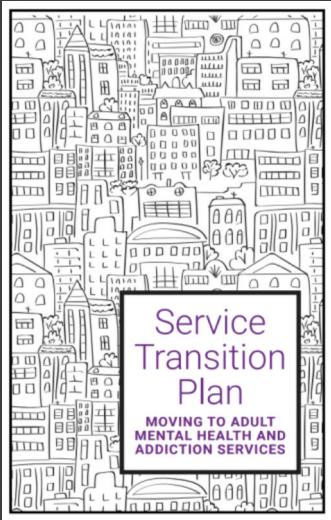


**23,545**

web searches  
(public website and eServices)

## Financial Review

	Core Fund	Time-Limited Initiatives/Projects Fund	Total 2019	Total 2018
<b>Revenues</b>				
Core Programs (Sch 1)	3,751,710	0	3,751,710	3,751,710
Time-Limited Initiatives/Projects (Sch 2)	0	994,641	994,641	831,168
Less: Capital Purchases	-25,742	0	-25,742	-13,061
Add: Amortized Provincial Grants	46,877	12,834	59,711	54,562
Adjusted Operating Grants	3,772,845	1,007,475	4,780,320	4,624,379
Investment Income	8,765	0	8,765	1,473
Other	293,901	0	293,901	159,761
	4,075,511	1,007,475	5,082,986	4,785,613
<b>Expenses</b>				
Core-Funded Expenses (Sch 3)	3,636,047	0	3,636,047	4,114,881
Time-Limited Initiatives/Project Expenses (Sch 4)	0	968,175	968,175	789,998
	3,636,047	968,175	4,604,222	4,904,879
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenses	439,464	39,300	478,764	-119,266
Fund Balance (Deficit), Beginning	-181,448	54,004	-127,444	-8,178
Surplus to be Recovered by MOHLTC	-145,568		-145,568	
Fund Balance Ending (Type 3 Unrestricted)	112,448	93,304	205,752	-127,444



**mindyourmind** had a very productive year, partnering with community agencies to develop new mental health resources for youth and young adults.

We worked with London's Transition Age Product (TAP) – a group of local service providers and

mental health organizations in the London-Middlesex area committed to developing a protocol for youth in child and adolescent mental health services who will soon be transitioning to adult services – resulting in the creation of a tool for youth and service providers working with youth, to prevent them from falling through the cracks in the system.

**mindyourmind** is one of twelve national organizations across the country offering innovative and inspiring opportunities for youth and young adults as part of the Canada Service Corps – funded by the Government of Canada. We have had the opportunity to work with teams of youth in Squamish, Halifax, and most recently Windsor, ON. This year we will travel to 2 more regions of the country. We will be engaging young people to positively affect their mental wellness. Our goals for the project are:

- mental health
- youth participation
- leadership
- skills development
- social change

In each community, the young people direct the focus of the mental health resource and we customize it specifically for them. In Halifax, for example, the youth team contributed to the development of a self-care booklet. It's a way to identify coping strategies, wellness tips, and be inspired. The Anchor book was produced in both French and English, and was so well-received we are currently doing a second printing.



The Squamish youth team contributed to the development of a trivia style online game, and eLearning modules – both called MIND – and each was developed in French and English. The youth wanted to focus on providing Mental Health 101 to their peers.

Most recently we worked with a group of youth in



Windsor, ON. They identified that they wanted to create an interactive online quiz game and a mental health workbook. These are currently in development and we hope to have these available in French, English, and a local Indigenous language as well.

# ConnexOntario Board of Directors 2018 | 2019

Throughout 2018-19 the board met several times with the executive committee doing extra duty. They joined the finance/audit committee in monthly meetings to monitor the results of our highly successful deficit recovery plan. Geoff Quirt, Valerie Johnston, and Beth McCarthy complete their terms of service in June 2019. ConnexOntario is extremely grateful for the years that each has devoted to the organization.

## **Geoff Quirt, Chair**

Trenton

## **Valerie Johnston**

Gravenhurst

## **Priya Paul**

Pickering

## **Sue Hillis, Vice Chair**

London

## **Elizabeth McCarthy**

London

## **Liana Palmerio-McIvor**

Oakville

## **Ron Hoffman, Secretary-Treasurer**

North Bay

## **Marcia Scarrow**

Red Lake

## **Aseefa Sarang, Member-at-Large**

Brampton

## **Marion Wright**

Ottawa