

ConnexOntario

Health Services Information  
Information sur les services de santé



DATA SERVICES + HELPLINES  
MAKING CONNECTIONS

2011 | 2012  
ANNUAL REPORT

# DATA SERVICES

The Data, Product and Service Management (DPSM) department continues to offer high-quality data services including ever-increasing numbers of requests for custom reports, maps, and automated data transfers.

The DPSM department also includes Health Data Liaison (HDL) staff who work directly with hundreds of organizations to maintain a comprehensive database of information used internally and by Local Health Integration Networks, government ministries, system planners, researchers, and other stakeholders.

In readiness for future requests, the HDLs are recording organizations implementing the Ontario Common Assessment of Need tool – a standardized decision-making tool used to assist in mental health recovery by identifying individual needs, matching those needs to existing services, and helping to identify service gaps.

Additionally, in order to enhance database strength, HDL staff are identifying:

- ❏ Which organizations have some form of formal accreditation
- ❏ Which organizations have policies in place for the inclusion of transgendered or transidentifying clients
- ❏ Which organizations have a TTY telephone number for the hearing-impaired
- ❏ Which organizations have video-conferencing capabilities, e.g., Ontario Telemedicine Network, Skype
- ❏ Which programs accept clients on Suboxone
- ❏ Which problem gambling programs offer self-exclusion services
- ❏ Which programs offer 24-hour crisis lines

As an enhanced service, the HDLs are working to provide electronic links – on the three helpline websites and in eServices – to assessment and/or referral forms specific to organizations participating on the ConnexOntario database.



# HELPLINES

***“People will forget what you said.  
People will forget what you did.  
But people will never forget how  
you made them feel”***

***~Maya Angelou***

The mandate of the Information and Referral Services department is to provide information, referral, and crisis support services to members of the general public and to professionals contacting the three toll-free helplines regarding alcohol, drug, problem gambling and mental health issues.

A wide range of queries – including, for example, requests for treatment availability, program criteria, assessment, and referral procedures – comes not only from the general public (including those with mental health and/or addictions issues) but also from professionals in many public sectors including addictions, healthcare, social services and correctional services.

This department’s Information and Referral Specialists pride themselves on responding promptly, accurately, efficiently, and professionally to a large range of contacts whether by telephone, email, or webchat. They assess each caller’s needs in order to provide appropriate information, referral, and support, ranging anywhere from the simple provision of a telephone number or a program’s address, to complex searches for services.

The IRS department staff reflects a combined 170 years of information and referral experience. The majority of staff is AIRS (Alliance of Information and Referral Systems) certified and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) trained. In order to ensure that callers are provided with the best experience possible, IRS staff continue their education with regular attendance at workshops and conferences, as well as service provider site visits.

*“...no one person or organization is responsible for connecting the various parts, or ‘breaking down the silos’...”*

*Don Drummond, Public Services for Ontarians: A Path to Sustainability and Excellence*

As ConnexOntario wraps up its 21<sup>st</sup> year of service in Ontario, we look to another year of great uncertainty in our sector. In January of this year, the Board and senior staff held a retreat with government policy analysis experts who were adamant that we will see unprecedented change to the healthcare system in the next 14 months. The Premier and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care have repeatedly stated there is a “need to do things differently.”

Although the Ontario government has chosen to not act upon many of the recommendations in the Drummond report to date, it is clearly going to be a cornerstone of the transformation process for Ontario. Mr. Drummond, quite rightly, pointed out that the healthcare system is fragmented, complicated, and most often, difficult to access. The passage quoted above and health policy direction clearly identifies continued opportunities and a strong role for ConnexOntario in the coming years.

Uniquely positioned to play a key role in “connecting the various parts” of the addictions and mental health components of the healthcare system, we have seen a significant increase in information requests – just one indicator of the ever more important role that ConnexOntario plays in system planning and development.

In the months ahead, we will seek to expand our range of strategic partnerships in the health and information fields and to further develop relationships that already exist. And, we will be open to opportunities that are sure to arise during a period of transformation in the health and human services sectors.

Au terme de sa 21<sup>e</sup> année d'offrande de services en Ontario, ConnexOntario envisage une autre année de grande incertitude dans notre secteur d'activités. En janvier de cette année, le conseil et les cadres supérieurs se sont réunis avec des experts en politiques du gouvernement qui croyaient fermement que le système de santé subirait des changements inédits dans les 14 prochains mois. Le premier ministre et la ministre de la santé et des soins de longue durée ont sans cesse répété qu'il existe un « besoin de faire les choses autrement ».

Bien que le gouvernement de l'Ontario a décidé à ce jour de ne pas mettre en œuvre les recommandations du rapport *Drummond*, ledit rapport représente clairement une pierre angulaire du processus de transformation pour l'Ontario. M. Drummond a signalé avec raison que le système de santé est fragmenté, compliqué, et souvent, difficile d'accès. Le passage cité ci-dessus et l'orientation des politiques en matière de santé identifient nettement des opportunités continues et un rôle important pour ConnexOntario dans les années qui viennent.

Uniquement disposée pour jouer un rôle clé dans la « réunion des diverses différentes parties » des composants toxicomanie et santé mentale du système de santé, nous avons constaté une augmentation notable des demandes d'information; un des indicateurs du rôle de plus en plus important que joue ConnexOntario dans la planification et le développement du système.

Dans les mois qui viennent, nous tenterons d'agrandir notre plage d'associations stratégiques dans les domaines de la santé et de l'information, et de solidifier les partenariats existants. Et nous demeurerons ouverts aux opportunités qui se présenteront assurément durant une période de transformation dans les secteurs de la santé et des services à la personne.

Brad Davey,  
Executive Director

Maureen McLelland  
Chair, Board of Directors





## Mission

Through the use of leading edge technology, ConnexOntario provides hope, early help and a human voice 24-hours per day to all individuals seeking information on, for example, mental health, drug, alcohol, and gambling problems. ConnexOntario also provides data to service planners seeking access to quality health and human services information.

*“ Folks at ConnexOntario do some of the most important work in response to trauma, addictions and mental health. More than delivering phone numbers, addresses and information they deliver hope where there was none, they open doors where there were only walls, and with compassion and skill they help people see that it can be done. They bring light to families and individuals who were in the dark. And they do it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I know this from being with many people in need (usually near midnight, it is just how it goes ) when they call. It often takes a lot of courage to dial the number, for some they are confronting their biggest fear. Without fail, your information and referral specialists have met the need. I see it as lifesaving, often literally. Be proud. ”*

**Tom Regehr**  
Founder & President  
CAST Canada

## New This Fiscal Year

- ❏ The Association of Ontario Health Centres project utilizes ConnexOntario's expertise in data storage, organization, and presentation
- ❏ Social media campaigns on Facebook and Twitter were launched, and Health Data Liaisons added Skype communication capabilities at their desks
- ❏ ConnexOntario was asked by the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH) to collect information for use in CAMH's smoking cessation study
- ❏ ConnexOntario is supporting the MOHLTC's expert panel on the delisting of OxyContin by preparing maps and collecting aggregate non-identifying data from callers to the Drug and Alcohol Helpline
- ❏ ConnexOntario was a regular contributor to TVO's "The Agenda". As part of the show's three-month-long series on mental health, ConnexOntario staff provided a live chat with viewers while the show's episodes aired
- ❏ Several ConnexOntario staff, including the Executive Director, were active on external committees, including eHealth, the Drug Treatment Funding Program (DTFP), and the Ontario Telemedicine Network Deployment Working Group
- ❏ The ConnexOntario Intranet was implemented as a centralized resource and communications centre for employees and the Board of Directors

# ConnexOntario: A Snapshot

More than **3,000** addictions and mental health programs and services, in 42 categories, hosted by 428 organizations over 1,192 sites held in the Connex database.



**1,919**  
Mental Health Programs/Services



**956**  
Drug & Alcohol Programs/Services



**163**  
Problem Gambling Programs/Services

**82%**



increase in requests for lists, statistics, data reports, charts, maps, etc. from external requestors 988 information requests resulting in more than 1000 ad hoc and standard reports created during the fiscal year.

OPGH support specialist 'first appointment' bookings for problem gamblers saw **25% growth** this year.



**642,765**

updates on next available date that a program could accept a new client.

## Helpline Contacts

	<b>30,881</b>	<b>+ 1.8%</b>
	<b>1,506</b>	<b>+ 9.9%</b>
	<b>16,485</b>	<b>+ 14.2%</b>
	<b>2,382</b>	<b>+ 53.6%</b>
	<b>7,389</b>	<b>- 24.9%</b>
	<b>381</b>	<b>+ 47.7%</b>

% change as compared to 2010-2011

Over **95%** of Organizations and Programs Validated



ConnexOntario Health Data Liaison staff regularly review organization and program data with the organizations themselves to ensure accuracy and currency of information, making any information updates as necessary.

D/A = Drug & Alcohol

MH = Mental Health

PG = Problem Gambling



= email & webchat

## The Simple Act of Listening

“I’m not sure if this is the right phone number but I really don’t know where to start” is a common refrain heard by the Information and Referral Specialists who answer the Mental Health Helpline.

Finding answers when feeling overwhelmed and struggling with your own illness, or trying to find help for family and friends can be difficult when you don’t know how or where to begin. Our callers will share that they’ve spent a lot of their time pouring through the phonebook looking for help and by the time they reach us, their frustration and confusion is understandable. What is a case worker? What is a Form 1? My daughter is in crisis, where can I get her help?

Often our interaction goes beyond providing correct information; it’s about taking time to truly hear what a caller needs. If you’ve never had to reach out for help before or were afraid to seek help because of the perceived stigma of mental illness, then making that first phone call can be a leap of faith.

No two calls are the same. We’ve heard some traumatic stories and heartache, but we’ve also heard stories of resiliency and success. It can be tough; there are a lot of people wishing to find help for themselves or for loved ones and sometimes they need to share a bit of personal history to provide context before we search for services to support them. Though we do not provide counselling, our Information and Referral Specialists will provide supportive listening as needed by the caller. Often the simple act of listening is cathartic. Being heard, respected and understood builds the foundation for a successful call and increases the likelihood that the caller will continue to reach out to services in their own community.

Reaching out for help can be a difficult first step. Besides the telephone, the Mental Health Helpline can be reached via email or webchat. Not everyone has access to a phone or feels comfortable communicating by phone, so being able to provide alternatives is valuable. The medium may be different but the goal is the same—accurate information, delivered in a timely manner by professionals who care.

~Tricia Korbut, Mental Health Helpline Supervisor

## Financial Review

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>DAH Fund</b>	<b>PGH Fund</b>	<b>MHH Fund</b>	<b>Time-Limited Initiatives</b>	<b>Total 2012</b>	<b>Total 2011</b>
Provincial Gov’t Grants	\$936,049	\$1,212,368	\$1,615,393		\$3,763,810	\$3,483,010
One-time Operating Grants/ Flow-Through				353,865	353,865	0
Less: Capital Purchases	(5,737)	(6,840)	(9,488)	(145,771)	(167,836)	(57,060)
Plus: Amortized Provincial Grants	6,885	5,364	8,345	82,357	102,951	74,776
Interest/Other/ Misc. Income	925	1,104	1,530	760	4,319	25,963
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$938,122</b>	<b>\$1,211,996</b>	<b>\$1,615,780</b>	<b>\$291,211</b>	<b>\$4,057,109</b>	<b>\$3,526,689</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>845,086</b>	<b>1,093,605</b>	<b>1,445,186</b>	<b>291,211</b>	<b>3,674,988</b>	<b>3,424,850</b>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenses for the Year	\$93,036	\$118,391	\$170,694	\$0	\$382,121	\$101,839

## Board of Directors

**Maureen McLelland, Chair**  
Health Sciences North  
Sudbury ON

**Brigitte Witkowski, Vice Chair**  
Mainstay Housing  
Toronto ON

**Don Barclay, Secretary-Treasurer**  
Professor Emeritus, Ivey School of Business  
London ON

**Marion Wright, Member-at-Large**  
The Alliance to End Homelessness  
Ottawa ON

**Diane Abbott**  
Barrister & Solicitor  
Ingersoll ON

**Alice Bellavance**  
Brain Injury Services of Northern Ontario  
Thunder Bay ON

**Terri Heggum-Allen**  
Loftus Allen & Co.  
Oakville ON

**Ernest Matton**  
Midland ON

**Jenny Rajaballey**  
Grand River Hospital  
Kitchener ON

**Donna Rogers**  
Four Counties Addiction Services  
Peterborough ON

**Ian Stewart**  
Halton ADAPT  
Burlington ON

## Contact Us

ConnexOntario Health Services Information  
200-685 Richmond Street London ON N6A 5M1  
Tel: 519.439.0174 Fax: 519.439.0455  
administration@connexontario.ca

## Websites

[www.connexontario.ca](http://www.connexontario.ca)  
[www.DrugAndAlcoholHelpline.ca](http://www.DrugAndAlcoholHelpline.ca)  
[www.MentalHealthHelpline.ca](http://www.MentalHealthHelpline.ca)  
[www.ProblemGamblingHelpline.ca](http://www.ProblemGamblingHelpline.ca)

Drug & Alcohol  
**Helpline**

Mental Health  
**Helpline**

Ontario Problem  
Gambling **Helpline**