

## Message from the Board Chair Maureen McLelland



Quality, efficiency, and integration were key values at ConnexOntario when I first joined the Board of Directors in 2007 and, today as I mark the end of my term as Chair, those values have not changed. Staff take tremendous pride in the quality of the data they collect, safeguard, and disseminate; their accurate provision of information – to members of the public, healthcare providers and system planners – aids in efforts to integrate addictions and mental health services across this vast province.

Strong partnerships formed with organizations such as the Ontario Telemedicine Network, Telehealth Ontario, the Association of Ontario Health Centres, and CAMH aid in the promotion of system efficiency, service integration, and improved data and service quality. Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships has been a strategic thrust of the Board and has been effectively operationalized by staff through many of the special projects that have been orchestrated this year.

Being data-rich and information-poor is a common problem in healthcare today. ConnexOntario, as a 'go-to' provider of high quality, real-time information about the mental health and addictions landscape in Ontario, helps inform local, regional, and provincial health system planning. The ability to respond rapidly to requests strengthens ConnexOntario's position as an information-rich agency operating databases of world-class quality and integrity. Innovative technology is continually leveraged to improve service access and efficiency for healthcare providers.

The Board has worked very effectively to ensure that we are providing effective governance – adopting industry best-practices and soliciting expert advice to help us understand the current political and fiscal environments, as well as information technology and human resources risks. Much thought has been given to the skills and expertise needed on the Board and within the organization. Strategic discussions have also taken place at the Board table about the markets that Connex must target now and in coming years.

The years I have spent as Chair of the Board of Directors have been enriching and personally rewarding. My fellow Board members have been wonderful to work with and I know that I speak for all of the Board when I say that we are very proud of the staff of this organization. I look forward to watching Connex move on to provide further value to Ontario's health system in the coming years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maureen McLelland', written in a cursive style.

## Message from the Executive Director Brad Davey



Firstly, I would like to thank Maureen McLelland for her stellar contribution as Chair of the ConnexOntario Board of Directors. I am very pleased that Maureen will continue to serve on our Board in the position of Past Chair for 2013-2014.

Secondly, I echo Maureen's comments about our staff and the high standard of work they perform on a daily basis. The result is the gathering and provision of information that is truly an "authoritative source" for both the public and healthcare professionals in Ontario.

For ConnexOntario, this past year has featured the strengthening of existing partnerships, the inception of new projects, and the continuance of innovation and technological improvements. All of these things have combined to inform the growth of our data and services offerings.

As Maureen said, the healthcare landscape has indeed often been data-rich and information-poor, and ConnexOntario, through the context gained over our 20-plus years of interaction with the province's healthcare sector, is assuredly part of the solution in this regard.

I believe you'll see, as you read this Annual Report, that this past year for ConnexOntario has been characterized by growth – and the future promises to show the same.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Davey', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



## 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.

## Tracking Provincial Healthcare Integration

ConnexOntario monitors the latest trends in the healthcare delivery system. In keeping with its Vision of "...helping people and organizations connect to the health and human services they need..." ConnexOntario is very interested in the potential development of integrated mental health and addiction services that would provide clear and efficient access points to the system. This integration not only includes the recognition of the overlap of mental health and addiction issues, but also focusses on creating a model where healthcare workers, managers, senior management, and policy makers work together to put the client's care first.

## 2012-13 Highlights: An overview of the initiatives that have taken place this year

- An Association of Ontario Health Centres (AOHC)-brokered project was undertaken to help bridge the gaps between various digital systems, and integrate data to create "information that tells a story" for AOHC-involved healthcare professionals
- Global Scheduling System expansion to further facilitate the sharing of resources and appointment times
- Warm transfers from Telehealth Ontario of callers requiring Helpline services
- Police Access Line to connect police officers with specific client resources
- Ontario Telemedicine Network data collection as a means to strengthen client referrals in the future
- Data Quality Reports and LHIN Scorecards



*“At a time when centralized access has become part of the critical conversation that addiction and mental health providers across the province are having, ConnexOntario stands as a vanguard and example of system integration at its finest. Like any great organization, ConnexOntario's most valuable resource is its human resources; among them are some of the most talented professionals I have ever had the pleasure of working with. ConnexOntario restores our faith in publicly-funded services and makes us all proud to work in healthcare.”*

*Deborah Gatenby, Past-President – Addictions Ontario*

# Data Services

ConnexOntario maintains a comprehensive database of information used internally, and externally by Local Health Integration Networks, government ministries, system planners, researchers, and other stakeholders. In addition, staff continue to answer data requests for custom reports, maps, and automated data transfers.

New services and data collected this past year include:

- the Police Access Line
- the introduction of shared calendars for the Global Scheduling System (GSS) and the option to book telephone appointments in the GSS
- the collection of Ontario Telemedicine Network studio locations
- an online submission option for recording program information changes
- tracking those organizations that have implemented the Ontario Common Assessment of Need
- the electronic collection of assessment/referral forms

*“For the community, ConnexOntario provides an important service by coordinating and facilitating up-to-date information on mental health and addiction services and providing access of this information to the general public. As an organization, we have found ConnexOntario and their staff very easy to work with and access to quality data and information valuable for strategic and system planning.”*

*Patty MacDonald, Director of Operations-CMHA-Sudbury/Manitoulin*

# Helplines

Staff answering ConnexOntario's three Helplines continue to provide exemplary service to members of the public and professionals. Extensive training and experience in the mental health and addictions sector allows them to better understand callers' needs and help with system education, navigation, and resource matching.

Persons contacting the Mental Health Helpline (MHH), the Drug and Alcohol Helpline (DAH), or the Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline (OPGH) for information, referral, and support often have their questions answered in four minutes or less. The Information and Referral Specialists, however, will take as long as necessary to provide assistance in more complex situations – including crisis support and suicide interventions – the number of which are, unfortunately, increasing, with nearly 300 situations dealt with last year.

The ability to webchat has been added to the IRS toolbox and has proven to be a popular means of contact, with the number of incoming webchats tripling since inception.





## Global Scheduling System

The GSS is a web-based appointment booking application created and maintained by ConnexOntario. Authorized users and Helpline staff may book client appointments directly into services offered by GSS - participating organizations. Originally an Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline pilot project, the GSS is undergoing expansion. Two new features have recently been added to the GSS: the ability for organizations to share appointments and calendars with others, where, for example, in Oxford County, Oxford Addiction Treatment Strategy participants utilize shared calendars in the GSS to more effectively meet client needs; and, the option to offer an in-person or telephone appointment helps to eliminate barriers clients may associate with having to travel to appointments.

## Association of Ontario Health Centres

Using a variety of digital systems, the AOHC gathers a vast amount of data to support the work of its member organizations. ConnexOntario was tasked with bridging the gap between the systems and creating usable information from this data through development of a data warehouse and the technical infrastructure to house sector data. As well, ConnexOntario created a portal and reporting tools to support data submission, access, and sharing. Phases of this project include associated support (e.g., help desk), development, and maintenance services.

*“ConnexOntario has been a fantastic partner for our project to integrate counselling for tobacco use into Ontario’s addiction treatment system. The staff’s intimate knowledge of the addiction and mental health systems has provided helpful direction in the design of our project. Their conscientious dedication to providing high quality information and meeting our sometimes difficult deadlines has been extremely helpful in keeping us on target. The staff has been a delight to work with.”*

*Mike DeVillaeer, Manager, Provincial Projects – Centre for Addiction and Mental Health*

## Police Access Line

ConnexOntario hosts and responds to calls to the Police Access Line (PAL), a dedicated toll-free number for Toronto-area police officers seeking specific mental health services for individuals they may come into contact with. A call to the PAL provides the officer with the location of an available safe bed or a referral to the Mental Health and Justice Prevention Program. Contacting PAL ensures immediate access to the necessary supports for the individual and provides cost-savings to the system by potential diversion from the emergency room and a more timely return to their duties for the officer.”

## Telehealth Ontario

With approval from funders, collaboration took place between ConnexOntario and Telehealth Ontario resulting in the development of a warm-transfer process. Between November 2012 and March 2013, Telehealth Ontario warm-transferred 502 callers directly to the Helplines. Removing the need for the caller to place a second call improves the caller experience and aids in system navigation. A valuable link has developed between the two organizations, with both seeing this project as a prime example of a cost-effective solution where the healthcare experience can be improved when integration of existing programs occurs.

## OTN

The Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) is a valuable tool for those unable to travel to service providers due to location, health, or other issues. ConnexOntario (through its validation process) and the OTN are collaborating on a project specific to identifying the locations of the telemedicine capabilities and programming at Ontario’s mental health and addiction organizations.

## Social Media and Public Relations

ConnexOntario continues to expand its social media efforts. Facebook sites are active with content being added daily. Staff again participated on TVO’s The Agenda during episodes dealing with mental health and addictions. Presentations have been made to diverse groups, including probation and parole officers, the United Way, the Canadian Civil Liberties Unions, as well as various LHINs, colleges, and universities.

# ConnexOntario: A Snapshot

More than **3,100**

addictions and mental health programs and services, in 53 categories, hosted by 460 organizations over 1,297 sites held in the Connex database.



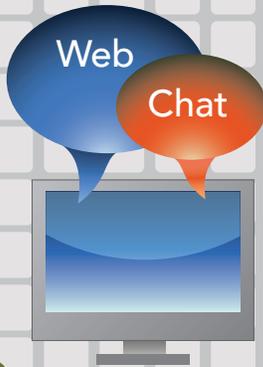
1,998  
Mental Health  
Programs/Services



964  
Drug & Alcohol  
Programs/Services



151  
Problem Gambling  
Programs/Services



**3x** increase to 4,508 webchats this year

**14%**



increase in requests for lists, statistics, data reports, charts, maps, etc. from external requestors. 1127 information requests resulting in nearly 1700 ad hoc and standard reports created during the fiscal year.



Over **97%** 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.

## Helpline Contacts

	27,626	-5.95%	DAH
	1,999	+32.74%	
	19,376	+37.39%	MHH
	3,654	+53.4%	
	9,802	+39.8%	OPGH
	219	-42.5%	

% change as compared to 2011-2012



ConnexOntario's Global Scheduling System (GSS) appointment booking application is more than just a tool for service providers – it can change lives. What follows is a documented example of how the GSS has been used to create better outcomes for those looking for help.

**The Caller:** Experiencing financial issues due to depression-related absenteeism at work, this single-parent found they were using alcohol more often when left alone. With no support from family, and dealing with custody/child support issues, the caller reached out to a local mental health service provider, but was unable to make contact with staff there for an appointment.

**The Solution:** ConnexOntario's Information and Referral Specialist (IRS) checked the GSS for appointment availability. It was determined via the GSS that there was an opening with a local service provider the next day at 2 pm. With caller permission, and utilizing the minimum amount of identifying information, the IRS booked this appointment without needing to contact the mental health organization directly. As a result of their call to the helpline, the client was provided with mental health system education, a referral to a program meeting their needs, and an appointment to discuss their needs the next day.

## Financial Review

Revenue	DAH Fund	OPGH Fund	MHH Fund	Time Limited Initiatives	Total 2013	Total 2012
Provincial Government Grants	\$936,049	\$1,212,368	\$1,615,393		\$3,763,810	\$3,763,810
One-time Operating Grants/ Flow-Through				323,380	323,380	353,865
Less: Capital Purchases	(23,831)	(28,414)	(39,414)	(38,125)	(129,785)	(167,836)
Plus: Amortized Provincial Grants	14,829	14,835	21,483	90,917	142,064	102,951
Interest/Other/ Miscellaneous Income	14,804	17,651	24,484	490	57,429	4,319
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$941,851</b>	<b>\$1,216,440</b>	<b>\$1,621,946</b>	<b>\$376,662</b>	<b>\$4,156,898</b>	<b>\$4,057,109</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>884,590</b>	<b>1,146,183</b>	<b>1,523,910</b>	<b>376,662</b>	<b>3,931,345</b>	<b>3,674,988</b>
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenses for the Year</b>	<b>\$57,261</b>	<b>\$70,257</b>	<b>\$98,036</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$225,554</b>	<b>\$382,121</b>

## ConnexOntario Board of Directors 2012 | 2013 Membership

**Maureen McLelland, Chair**  
Sudbury

**Brigitte Witkowski**  
Toronto

**Alice Bellavance**  
Thunder Bay

**Jenny Rajaballey, Vice Chair**  
Kitchener

**Sonja Grbevski**  
Windsor

**Terri Heggum-Allen**  
Oakville

**Don Barclay, Secretary-Treasurer**  
London

**Wayne Blampied**  
Brampton

**Donna Rogers**  
Peterborough

**Marion Wright, Member-at-Large**  
Ottawa

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[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**