

FAMILY OF SUPPORT: CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Impact Report Year Six



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THE SOBEY
FOUNDATION



Family
of Support

CANADA'S
CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL
FOUNDATIONS

Early Leaders in Early Intervention



The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI)

released some optimistic findings on youth mental health last year. A May 2025 report noted that the number of youth presenting with mental health crises at emergency departments in Canada in 2023-2024 was down 31% from five years earlier. In October 2025, CIHI further noted that growing shares of young people with mental health concerns reported accessing community-based services.

These are encouraging signs that a foundational priority of Family of Support – earlier intervention in youth mental health challenges – is gaining momentum across the country. The work of Canada’s children’s hospitals is a vital part of that momentum. Hospital-based clinicians and experts are driving not just responsive programs but also research, public awareness efforts, and creative collaborations with community agencies and providers.

As hospitals and health systems work toward earlier interventions in youth mental health, experts continue to add to the trove of evidence about the power of timely support. The 2025 Thrive report, developed by Deloitte and supported by Canada’s Children’s Hospital Foundations (CCHF) and Children’s Healthcare Canada, powerfully affirmed the economic value of early intervention. It found that for mood disorders alone, connecting even 60% of affected teens with timely support could save health systems more than \$560 million annually.

These developments only affirm the approach Family of Support has been advancing for more than half a decade. Empire Company Limited and The Sobey Foundation have been vital advocates for and partners in the move toward earlier intervention in youth mental health. Your emphasis on helping young people more quickly – working to prevent them from reaching a point of crisis – has helped to shape the Canadian conversation about the mental, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth.

CCHF has been proud to work alongside you – and grateful for your engagement and investment – in striving to help hospitals meet the needs of Canada’s young people more quickly, in order to help children and youth improve their well-being and take steps toward lifelong mental health.

As we conclude the first phase of our new five-year collaboration, we’re pleased to share this overview of the work Family of Support has helped to enable over the past year, as well as insight into the cumulative results of this extraordinary long-term collaboration. We look forward to continuing this critical work to help more young people, more quickly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Adam Starkman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "A" and "S".

Adam Starkman

President & Chief Executive Officer
Canada’s Children’s Hospital Foundations

Transforming Child and Youth Mental Health Across Canada

Over the past six years, the **Family of Support: Child & Youth Mental Health Initiative** – a powerful collaboration between Empire Company Limited, The Sobey Foundation, and Canada’s Children’s Hospital Foundations – has helped transform the mental health landscape for children and youth across Canada. As care patterns shift away from emergency interventions toward more community-based and preventative supports, this initiative has been at the forefront – funding innovative, locally driven programs across the full continuum of care.

Key Measures: Six Year Data Recap

Family of Support is a major national partnership focused on early interventions in child and youth mental health, involving 13 children’s hospitals and hundreds of experts and care providers. Its work can be summarized in **four key measures**:

Measure 1: Assessments



146,282

children and youth assessed: the first step towards connecting them with the right mental health supports.

Measure 2: People Trained



21,926

care providers trained, enhancing their skills and expanding young people’s access to high-quality care.

Measure 3: Patients Served



149,608

patients served through evidence-based programs that respond to local needs.

Measure 4: Treatment Spaces



138

treatment spaces added or enhanced to help keep patients and caregivers safe while enabling care and learning.

“For so long, we felt like we were drowning. The support we received at the Alberta Children’s Hospital’s Mental Health Unit and The Summit allowed us to take our first big breath and now, a year later, allows us to keep breathing. We are so grateful for the exceptional teams at the hospital and The Summit and the many generous people in our community who make this level of care possible for families like ours. Because of this community, my son has joy in his life again. And we are so grateful.”

Donna Smith, mother of Riley, age 13, who received support for Tourette’s, obsessive compulsive disorder, and ADHD.

The figures above are cumulative totals (2020–2026) connected to programs the Family of Support partnership helps to make possible.

Family of Support funding aided a diverse range of mental health programs this year, nearly all continued from previous years. All programs are selected, designed, and led locally, with each hospital foundation empowered to allocate funds to initiatives that reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. Focus areas include:



Early intervention through timely assessments and preventive care



Integrating mental health research into the delivery of care



Holistic supports that increase social, emotional, and spiritual well-being



Family therapy that strengthens the circle of support for young people

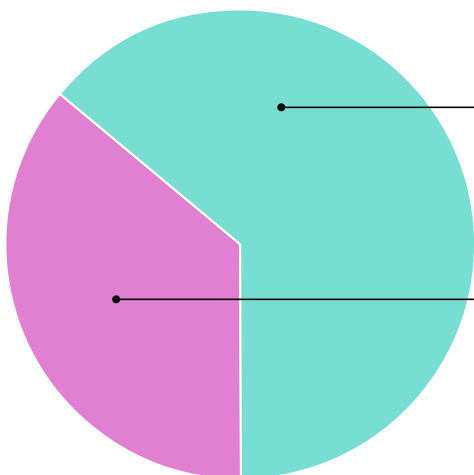


Capacity-building and process improvements to accelerate access to care

Investment Overview

Since 2020, total donations connected to Family of Support have reached a remarkable **\$27.2 million**. In 2025 alone, Family of Support and its network raised **\$5,343,193**, enabling a total of 16* evidence-based mental health programs and services.

\$5,343,193



\$3,423,193

in funds raised locally by store teams and teammates

\$1,920,000

in direct donations from The Sobey Foundation and Empire Company Limited

*Direct donations from The Sobey Foundation and Empire Company Limited supported programs selected by local children's hospitals for formal inclusion in the Family of Support partnership, as well as other urgent local priorities related to youth mental health – especially in the areas of early intervention and capacity-building.

"I'm helping create the kind of support I once needed. The IWK gave me a safe place to heal, people who believed in me, and the confidence to use my story to help others. If sharing my journey helps even one young person feel less alone, it's worth it."

Jenna, 22 – Received support for anxiety, depression, and anorexia





Measure 1: Assessments

The Family of Support: Child & Youth Mental Health Initiative has helped to enable over 146,000 assessments since 2020. In some cases, these are in-depth processes, like the detailed neuropsychological assessments carried out at SickKids. In other cases, like those at the Stollery Walk-In Clinic, they are more immediate evaluations that help care providers guide young people and families toward the right supports.

Assessments are the critical first step in young people's mental health journeys, when professionals evaluate their needs and connect them with appropriate support. Assessment may occur when a young person seeks mental health support, or it may take place when a team caring for a young person with a physical health concern proactively connect them with a mental health assessment, recognizing that physical issues often affect mental health.

Program Spotlight

Stollery Walk-In Clinic Stollery Children's Hospital

The Stollery's walk-in clinic is an important part of an integrated, coordinated mental health support system for young people in the Edmonton area. Children and youth who present at the clinic, which is housed in the Stollery's Emergency Department, receive rapid assessment and any needed stabilization support. Care teams at the clinic then connect young people and their families with community resources – counsellors, group therapy offerings, caregiver supports, and other offerings. This coordinated approach, aided in part by Family of Support funds, ensures that young people receive the right level of support at the right time, promoting recovery while reducing the need for future emergency visits.

Learn more: www.familyofsupport.com/en/foundations/stollery-childrens-hospital-foundation



Measure 2: People Trained

Since 2020, Canada's children's hospitals, aided by Family of Support, have trained nearly 22,000 professionals – from pediatricians and nurses to social workers and emergency physicians. These efforts have helped professionals expand their knowledge and skills in areas such as trauma-informed care, migration and settlement, family-based care, and prevention and early intervention.

Training in mental health can help people in a wide range of roles – not only in clinical settings but also in areas like education community services – to improve young people's access to high-quality, evidence-based support. Family of Support-enabled training initiatives have included specialized opportunities for health professionals as well as offerings that build mental health literacy in community settings.

Program Spotlight

PainCare 360 BC Children's Hospital

The PainCare 360 program at BC Children's Hospital has driven remarkable progress in pediatric pain care. Family of Support has helped the leaders of this innovative program ease the mental toll on kids with chronic complex pain, as well as young people experiencing severe discomfort during hospitalization. In 2025, PainCare 360 successfully launched a peer-to-peer support group: a youth-led, psychologically safe space designed for adolescents and young adults experiencing complex pain. This program is one reflection of how meaningful mental health support can be effectively provided by non-clinicians. Family of Support continues help bring PainCare 360's vision to life: healthier, happier children, youth, and families through better pain care.

Learn more: www.familyofsupport.com/en/foundations/bc-childrens-hospital-foundation



Measure 3: Patients Served

The need for mental health care among children and youth across Canada is immense. Since 2020, funding from Family of Support has helped Canada's children's hospitals serve nearly 150,000 children and youth with mental health concerns. In addition to supporting specific evidence-based mental health programs, funds from Family of Support are helping hospitals build capacity and innovate to keep pace with demand.

The "patients served" measure captures any young person who has directly received mental health care from a program connected to Family of Support – from therapeutic arts programs at Alberta Children's Hospital to family-based therapy for youth living with eating disorders at Montreal Children's Hospital

Program Spotlight

Transition Care Program Children's Hospital, London, Ontario

For young people living with mental health challenges, turning 18 often means saying goodbye to the pediatric care teams who know them best and stepping into an unfamiliar adult healthcare system. That transition can be frightening – and without the right support, it can interrupt treatment when stability matters most. Funded in part through the generosity of Family of Support, Children's Hospital's Transition Care Program helps ensure no young person falls through the cracks. By connecting pediatric and adult care teams before the transition happens, the program creates a personalized bridge to adult care, helping youth move forward with confidence, continuity, and hope.

Learn more: www.familyofsupport.com/en/foundations/childrens-health-foundation



Measure 4: Treatment Spaces

Family of Support funds have supported nearly 140 new treatment spaces and facility upgrades. The partnership has helped children's hospitals increase the number of spaces that include important safety features for patients, families, and staff. Financial support has also helped hospitals give more patients access to environments designed for calm and comfort, and to advanced equipment designed to build skills and resilience.

Treatment spaces for mental health help to make young people safe and comfortable while they receive or await care. They include regular treatment rooms as well as more specialized facilities such as emergency spaces for kids in crisis and high-tech training and observation rooms. Increasing the availability of appropriate clinical spaces can help to support earlier intervention by ensuring that both the people and the places that support high-quality care are available when they're needed.

Program Spotlight

Purpose-Built Space for Learning and Care IWK

The Learning Link is a physical and virtual space where clinicians, researchers, youth, and families learn together in order to expand access to high-quality addiction and mental health care across the Maritimes. In 2025, aided in part by Family of Support, the Learning Link reached a major milestone with the opening of a purpose-built facility designed to support clinical care, family engagement, and workforce development. The space includes clinical areas, family rooms, and flexible training environments.

Learn more: www.familyofsupport.com/en/foundations/iwk-foundation

Program Overview

Member Foundation	Program Name	Year Six Assess-ments	Year Six People Trained	Year Six Patients Served	Year Six Treatment Spaces
Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation	Mental Health Research 4 Kids Integrating research into care	–	–	✓	–
Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation	Patient- and Family-Centered Care Therapeutic arts, recreation, horticulture	–	–	✓	–
BC Children's Hospital Foundation	PainCare 360 Managing pain and its MH effects	✓	✓	✓	–
Children's Health Foundation	Transition Care Program Supporting patients' move to adult care	✓	–	✓	–
CHEO Foundation	Dialectical Behaviour Therapy For families	✓	✓	✓	–
CHEO Foundation	Child and Youth Counsellor in Emergency Department	✓	✓	✓	–
CHEO Foundation	Head to Toe Screening program to identify suicide risk	✓	✓	✓	–
The Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba	PRIME: Partnering for Innovation in Mental Health through eHealth Excellence	✓	✓	✓	✓
CHU Sainte-Justine Foundation	AI Solutions Reduce admin, free up clinical time	–	–	–	–
IWK Foundation	Learning Link Diverse learning and care initiatives; in 2025, new physical facility	✓	✓	✓	✓
Janeway Children's Hospital Foundation	Mental Health Programs at the Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre, including the Tuckamore Centre	–	–	–	–
Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation	Youth Mental Health Navigators Individual support accessing services	✓	–	–	–
MacKids	Substance Use Supports	–	–	✓	–
The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation	Eating Disorders Program and Family-Based Care Family therapy and other clinical supports	✓	–	✓	–
SickKids Foundation	Neuropsychological Assessments In-depth evaluation to identify supports	✓	–	✓	–
Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation	Stollery Mental Health Services Walk-In Clinic and related resources	✓	✓	✓	–

Learn more: www.familyofsupport.com