OMSSA
ONTARIO MUNICIPAL SOCIAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION

75TH ANNIVERSARY
1950-2025

MAY 13-14, 2025 | TORONTO

EXCHANGE CONFERENCE PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

A NOTE FROM OMSSA'S PRESIDENT

On behalf of OMSSA's Board of Directors and staff, I'm excited to share our 2025 Exchange Conference program.

Coming to you in-person from May 13-14, our Conference brings together hundreds of human services professionals from front-line employees to service managers, and community organizations, from across Ontario to exchange knowledge, best practices, and creative solutions.

Our Association and Members are committed to tackling society's greatest challenges as we put a foundation in place for greater connectivity and growth to respond to local and national needs, and to ensure we leave no one behind in our communities.

We took great care to ensure the 2025 OMSSA Exchange Conference offers something for everyone in our sectors. I'm confident that you will find valuable sessions that pique your interest and give you a compelling reason to participate.

Consider what you learn at our annual Exchange Conference as enhancing your key skills and competencies on your immediate team and as training to become a volunteer leader within OMSSA and human services.

Hear from experts, partners, and members about timely and relevant information and practical take-aways. This includes insights into best practices from our Local Municipal Champions, and issues like outreach practices, landlord engagement, end of mortgage strategies, NIMBYism, effective communication and advocacy, expanding not-for-profit and public child care, and much more., and so much more!

Many thanks to our conference planning committee, who helped to ensure that we could build a program focused on today's realities and tomorrow's big questions:

- (Chair) Tod Duncan, OMSSA
- Tomi Akinyede, District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board
- Stuart Beumer, City of Hamilton
- Christine Heavens, Coachrane District Services Board
- Christie Herrington, OMSSA
- Emily Hollington, County of Lanark
- Colm Holmes-Hill, City of Windsor

- Pam Kent, Prince Edward-Lennox and Addington Social Services
- Rob Kirsic, OMSSA
- Kevin Pal, Regional Municipality of York
- Marco Palermo, City of Toronto
- Margo Smith, County of Renfrew
- Caroline Yabsley, City of Ottawa
- Samantha Zuercher, County of Simcoe

I encourage you to take a closer look at the 2025 Exchange Conference program, and I look forward to welcoming you from May 13-14.

75 ANNIVERSARY 1950-2025

OMSSA
ONTARIO MUNICIPAL SOCIAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION

MAY 13-14, 2025 | TORONTO

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

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SCHEDULE-AT-A-GLANCE

DAY 1: TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025

Time					
8:00 - 8:45 AM	BREAKFAST AND REGISTRATION				
8:45 - 10:20 AM	OPENING REMARKS AND PLENARY				
10:20 - 10:40 AM	*BREAK*				
10:40AM - 12:00PM	**BREAKOUTS #1**				
	1.1	**1.2**	**1.3**	**1.4**	**1.5**
	• Infant and Early Mental Health Care Pathways • Integrated Systems + Unique Data Collection = Better Child Outcomes ROOM TBC	• Local Municipal Champion: Region of Peel - From Idea to Impact: Expanding Access to Essential Services in Peel Region • Closer Than They Appear: Navigating Client Journeys with Partnership Development and Asset Mapping ROOM TBC	• Collaborative Outreach: Providing Tiered Care for Homeless Populations • Rethinking Paramedicine to Better Support the Community, Improve Access to Care, and Reduce Impact on Toronto's Health Care System ROOM TBC	• Landlord Engagement in Durham Region • Supporting Tenants and Preserving Tenancies in Community Housing ROOM TBC	Sponsor Presentation ROOM TBC
12:00 - 1:15 PM	*LUNCH*				
1:15 - 2:35 PM	**BREAKOUTS #2**				
	2.1	**2.2**	**2.3**	**2.4**	**2.5**
	• Local Municipal Champion: City of Windsor: Windsor-Essex Registered Early Childhood Educators Campaign • Local Municipal Champion: Northumberland Early Years Employment Initiative ROOM TBC	• Collaborating to Address Encampments: Assertive Street Outreach in Niagara • Peel's Asylum Claimant Response ROOM TBC	• Meeting the Moment: Designing a Local End of Mortgage Strategy ROOM TBC	• Reconciliation with Purpose, a Healing-Informed, Transformational, Collaborative Framework to Become Urban Kin ROOM TBC	Sponsor Presentation ROOM TBC

SCHEDULE-AT-A-GLANCE

DAY 1: TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025

2:35 - 2:55 PM	*BREAK*				
2:55 - 4:15 PM	**BREAKOUTS #3**				
	3.1	**3.2**	**3.3**	**3.4**	**3.5**
	• Inclusion for All: System Review of the Special Needs and Inclusion Supports • Quality Assurance and Compliance in Special Needs Resourcing ROOM TBC	• Local Municipal Champion: Region of Durham: Building Collaborations for Responsive Mental Health and Social Case Supports and Services Durham • Local Municipal Champion: Access to Integrated Care in Couchiching: A Partnership Between the County of Simcoe Ontario Works and Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital ROOM TBC	• Building Bridges: Addressing the Housing Crisis for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities: A Municipal Perspective • Building Bridges: Collaborative Housing Solutions for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities ROOM TBC	• Presentation TBC ROOM TBC	Sponsor Presentation ROOM TBC
6:00 PM - 12:00 AM	2025 AWARDS BANQUET ROOM TBC				

SCHEDULE-AT-A-GLANCE

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2025

Time	Content				
8:00 - 8:45 AM	BREAKFAST AND REGISTRATION				
8:45 - 9:00 AM	OPENING REMARKS				
9:00 - 9:10 AM	BREAK				
9:10 - 10:30 AM	BREAKOUTS #4				
	4.1	**4.2**	**4.3**	**4.4**	**4.5**
	• Welcoming the Rainbow: Creating Resources for 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion in Children's Programs • "Embracing Black Hair" Beauty Salon & Barber Shop ROOM TBC	• Growth by Design: Expanding Not-for-Profit and Public Child Care ROOM TBC	• Celebrating Success in Life Stabilization: Opportunities for Collaboration and Learning ROOM TBC	• Addressing NIMBYism in Transitional Housing Projects • Approaches to Effective Communication and Advocacy ROOM TBC	• Local Municipal Champion: County of Renfrew: Mesa - A Collaborative Approach to Compassionate Care • Navigating Housing Instability: Strategies for Supporting Clients with Complex Needs ROOM TBC
10:30 - 10:50 AM	BREAK				
10:50AM - 12:10PM	BREAKOUTS #5				
	5.1	**5.2**	**5.3**	**5.4**	**5.5**
	• The Power of Stay Interviews: A Key to Unlocking Employee Engagement and Retention • Building Workforce Sustainability in Child Care and Early Years: A Collaborative Approach Between the Region of Waterloo and Ryelle Strategy Group ROOM TBD	• Advancing Health Equity in Housing and Child Care Settings: Opportunities to Improve Conditions Through Collaboration Across Sectors ROOM TBD	• Homelessness and Community Response Team in Durham Region, a Continuum of Support • Key Lessons Learned from the Grey Bruce Community Safety and Well-Being Plan ROOM TBD	• People, Process, and Paper: Evaluating Toronto's STARS Supports Assessment Tool • Using a Data-Driven Prioritization Method to Support the Launch of Needs-Based Portable Housing Subsidies ROOM TBD	• Inner Outer Change: Conscious Leadership and Self-Reflection for Leaders in Human Services ROOM TBD
12:10 - 1:10 PM	LUNCH				
1:10 - 2:30 PM	CLOSING REMARKS PLENARY ROOM TBC				

Session Descriptions & Speakers

TUESDAY, MAY 13

OPENING REMARKS & PLENARY

TITLE TBC
Room: TBC

Land Acknowledgement and Opening Remarks:
- **TBC**

TITLE TBC

Session description coming soon.

Presenters:
- **TBC**

BREAKOUTS #1

1.1 A) Infant and Early Mental Health Care Pathways & B) Integrated Systems + Unique Data Collection = Better Child Outcomes
Room: TBC

Presentation A

York Region, in partnership with SickKids Infant Mental Health Promotion Program (IEMHP) and the City of Hamilton, is pleased to present a joint "Infant and Early Mental Health Care Pathways" presentation on 'Leading the Way' a project that empowers municipalities to address complex issues that face children 0-6 and support integration across health and human services.

This presentation describes the municipal interventions that can support changing the trajectory of children's lives by creating pathways that ensure equitable access to prevention, identification, and support for nurturing mental health in children birth to six. The project supports early identification of mental health concerns and facilitating access to appropriate care prior to school entry as it can address the complex needs of communities and helps mitigate the existing pressures municipalities are experiencing.

Session Descriptions & Speakers

It takes a village to raise a child, and we believe it takes everyone in that village working together to ensure we work collaboratively as a system for our children.

SickKids Infant Mental Health Promotion Program, The City of Hamilton and York Region will highlight their local experiences in implementing pathways to enhance local service coordination.

Presenters:
- **Hadir Ashry**, Senior Project Manager, IEMH Care Pathways, Infant and Early Mental Health Promotion, SickKids Learning Institute, The Hospital for Sick Children
- **Melissa Biksa**, Manager, Healthy Growth and Development, Public Health Services, Healthy Families, City of Hamilton
- **Kathy Lucky**, Manager, EarlyON and Children's Community Programs, Community and Health Services, Social Services, The Regional Municipality of York

Presentation B

Children First in Essex County is a multi service agency providing services for families with children up to six years of age who are at risk for or experiencing mental health or developmental concerns. As the dedicated Special Needs Resourcing agency, they partner with the City of Windsor, Children's Services as the Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) for Windsor-Essex including their recent project to create an early years pathway from EarlyON to the mental health sector as published in Infant Mental Health Journal, they will share how screening and assessment tools can be integrated into services. They will demonstrate how these tools can support better outcomes for children, and how their CMSM transforms the data into actionable insights for better quality programs and into a robust Child Care and Early Learning Service System Plan. Participants will learn how to use the HEADS-ED under 6 screening tool and apply it to real life scenarios.

Presenters:
- **Lori Kempe**, Executive Director, Children First in Essex County
- **Joel Schryer**, Senior Clinical Manager, Children First in Essex County

Session Descriptions & Speakers

1.2 **A) Local Municipal Champion: Region of Peel - From Idea to Impact: Expanding Access to Essential Services in Peel Region & B) Closer Than They Appear: Navigating Client Journeys with Partnership Development and Asset Mapping**

Room: TBC

Presentation A

The demand for mental health, addiction and digital access services has surged, driven by a growing awareness of these issues and an increasing need for support.
This session will focus on Peel Region's partnerships and innovative solutions to meet the evolving needs of the community. From the initial idea to impactful execution, we will outline the engagement process and collaborative efforts between internal and external partners to design and implement essential programming in Peel such as the Wellness Response and Assistance Program (WRAP) and Digital Literacy Program.

Presenters:
- **Ramona Karteros**, Manager of Income and Social Supports, Peel Region
- **Jennifer Lamond**, Income and Social Supports Program Analyst, Peel Region
- **Naveed Chaudhry**, Executive Director, Peel Multicultural Council

Presentation B

Join us for an insightful presentation on how the Cochrane District Services Board (CDSB) has leveraged partnership development to enhance client supports throughout their journey. Guided by the social determinants of health, the CDSB Community Development and Services team has strategically targeted key partnerships and collaborations to strengthen relationships and uncover new aspects of client support and care from service providers across the Cochrane District.

As part of this initiative, the team compiled a comprehensive asset map database that details not only the services offered by providers but also the newly discovered knowledge that can further support clients. Using this asset map and the social determinants of health as guiding tools, the Cochrane District Ontario Works team is now better equipped to provide wrap-around supports and achieve success as part of the Employment Service Transformation (EST).

Session Descriptions & Speakers

In this presentation, the team will share their innovative approach, the outcomes of their work, and how the project has evolved to benefit the entire district and their partners. Discover how these efforts have transformed CDSB's client support and care.

Presenters:
- **Christine Heavens**, Director, Community Development and Services, Cochrane District Services Board
- **Joanne Kennedy**, Program Manager, Housing and Ontario Works Cochrane District Services Board
- **Julia Mathew**, Administrative Coordinator, Community and Development Services, Cochrane District Services Board

1.3 A) Collaborative Outreach: Providing Tiered Care for Homeless Populations & B) Rethinking Paramedicine to Better Support the Community, Improve Access to Care, and Reduce Impact on Toronto's Health Care System

Room: TBC

Presentation A

Innovation using current best practices to respond to the needs of individuals residing homeless and in encampments. Outcomes include successfully addressing medical needs, liaising with other health care providers, providing service navigation to other wraparound supports, and This presentation is to showcase the relationship between Community Paramedics (Brant-Brantford Community Paramedic Services), City of Brantford Housing & Homelessness Services, and City of Brantford Bylaw Services and the collaborative nature. A version of the uploaded presentation is currently being delivered by Brant-Brantford Paramedics at the EMS annual conference in the upcoming weeks. We will be slightly revising it to be delivered from a City of Brantford perspective but would capture identical information highlighting the successes of the collaborative response in the community.

Presenters:
- **Mary Musson**, Senior Director Community Services and Social Development, City of Brantford
- **Curtis Madden**, Community Paramedic & Advanced Care Paramedic, City of Brantford
- **Dave Wiedrick**, Director, Bylaw Compliance and Security, City of Brantford

Session Descriptions & Speakers

Presentation B

The Community Paramedicine (CP) presentation will highlight how Paramedics are identifying and addressing the needs of Toronto's most vulnerable residents by providing care outside the traditional 911 system. Through upstream approaches, CP addresses social determinants of health, offering support and continuity of care for clients in their homes. It aims to reduce recurring 911 calls and emergency department visits, improving ambulance availability and healthcare system capacity.

Clients are identified through referrals from frontline paramedics during 911 calls, analyzing frequent 911 use, and input from hospitals, social service providers, primary care providers, other emergency services, family, friends, or self-referrals. Once identified, clients are matched to specific CP programs based on their needs.

CPs conduct home visits to assess clients, provide in-home care, and connect them to services to address unmet needs. Community Paramedic-Led Wellness Clinics further support residents in social housing, shelters, and natural occurring retirement communities through recurring clinics. Partnered Street Outreach in collaboration with street outreach workers and Toronto Community Crisis Service works to ensure care and service are brought to those experiencing homelessness. The Homebound Vaccination Program delivers influenza and COVID vaccinations seasonally to those who are not able to leave their homes.

By connecting primary, acute, and community care systems, CP ensures seamless continuity of care, better outcomes for clients, and a more efficient healthcare system.

Presenters:
- **Ashley Barber**, Superintendent, Community Paramedicine Program, Toronto Paramedic Services
- **Erin Stankevicius**, Superintendent, Community Paramedicine Program, Toronto Paramedic Services

Session Descriptions & Speakers

1.4 **A) Landlord Engagement in Durham Region & B) Supporting Tenants and Preserving Tenancies in Community Housing**

Room: TBC
Presentation A

Building strong relationships with landlords is key to growing and sustaining units for low-income residents in Durham Region. The Housing Programs team will provide their approach to increasing partnership and best practices for maintaining critical relationships despite challenges in the sector.

Presenters:
- **Kristen Fernandes**, Housing Program Coordinator, Region of Durham
- **Lori Barber**, Housing Program Coordinator, Region of Durham

Presentation B

Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation (DRLHC) supports over 1300 tenants across 23 sites. In 2017, rising tenant challenges led to the creation of new positions to support tenants and collaborate with service providers. These roles have strengthened communities, prevented evictions, resolved conflicts, and assisted with daily living. Tenants now take pride in their communities and support each other. Future goals include expanding this program to community housing partners to enhance local tenant support systems. This presentation will share our experience in developing DRLHC tenant support programming, building partnerships with community agencies, connecting tenants to supports, and examples of community-building events and outcomes.

Presenters:
- **Lisa Pitcher**, Housing Program Coordinator for the Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation, Region of Durham
- **Mary Taylor**, Housing Program Coordinator for the Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation, Region of Durham

Session Descriptions & Speakers

BREAKOUTS #2

2.1 A) Local Municipal Champion: City of Windsor: Windsor-Essex Registered Early Childhood Educators Campaign & B) Local Municipal Champion: Northumberland County: Early Years Employment Initiative

Room: TBC

Presentation A

Session description coming soon.

Presenters:
- TBC

Presentation B

The Early Years Employment Initiative (EYEI) is a collaboration between the Early Years (EY) and Ontario Works (OW) Divisions at Northumberland County that creates opportunities for OW clients and students to start/re-start careers in the Early Years sector. The six-week duration of the EYEI program is divided into two-weeks of in-class learning followed by four-weeks of field experience. The in-class sessions provide participants with opportunities to acquire certificates relevant to employment both within and outside of the Early Years sector. These include WHMIS, Safe Food Handlers, First-Aid/CPR, resume writing skills, Occupational Health and Safety training, Foundations to Play (How Does Learning Happen), and Self-Regulation training (Merhit Centre). The four-weeks of field experience are offered in local child care centres where participants offer support roles for child care staff. These placement opportunities allow participants to observe the many different employment pathways in the child care sector, such as Dietary Staff, Early Childhood Assistants, and Early Childhood Educators.

The EYEI program fosters participation by offering above minimum wage pay across all six-weeks and provides child care opportunities for participants with school-aged children. Offering the EYEI program in the summer months allows this flexibility for child care arrangements. The EYEI program received critical partnerships from Fleming College, Watton Employment Services, Northumberland YMCA, and Five Counties Children's Centre. The program supports Northumberland's Early Years Workforce Strategy for recruitment and retention. Over the last three years of running the EYEI Program, 50% of participants have accepted employment opportunities post-placement or chose to move on toward post-secondary education in the Early Years Sector or Child Development.

Session Descriptions & Speakers

Presenters:
- **Christine Mumford**, Early Years Coordinator, Early Years, Community & Social Services, Northumberland County
- **Kameka Kirby-Chang**, Early Learning Capacity Building and Workforce Mentor, Five Counties Children's Centre
- **Hafsa Asif**, RECE Graduate

2.2 A) Collaborating to Address Encampments: Assertive Street Outreach in Niagara & B) Region of Peel's Asylum Claimant Response - A Model of Leadership and Collaboration

Room: TBC

Presentation A

Session description coming soon.

Presenters:
- TBC

Presentation B

This session will highlight Peel Region's innovative approach to supporting asylum claimants, from addressing overwhelmed shelters to creating sustainable, strategic solutions. Attendees will learn how Peel partnered with the IRCC and service providers to establish the Peel Reception Centre Pilot, offering short-term housing, on-site settlement services, employment support, housing assistance, and access to income support programs (Ontario Works). The presentation will also emphasize the importance of partnership building in service delivery, showcasing Peel's commitment to leadership in meeting the needs of asylum claimants.

Presenters:
- **Jason Hastings**, Director, Strategic Initiatives, Region of Peel
- **Lisa-Marie Middleton**, Manager, Asylum Claimant Response, Region of Peel

Session Descriptions & Speakers

2.3 **Meeting the Moment: Designing an Local End of Mortgage Strategy**

Room: TBC

Communities thrive when everyone has a place to call home. All Service Managers and DSAABs are responding to the growing demand for affordable housing. Community housing funding is changing as mortgages of Housing Services Act housing providers become fully paid. This will require housing providers and municipalities to proactively prepare for the change, and to work collaboratively to manage this.

As the mortgages of housing providers end, the Region is encouraging informed decision making and facilitated engagement that recognizes the crucial role housing providers play in housing sustainability now and in the future.

In response to this change, the Region of Waterloo created the Community Housing Succession Strategy to preserve, protect, and strengthen the local sector by:

- Jointly assessing housing provider core competencies (i.e. financial management, asset management, operations, and governance)
- Engaging with housing provider staff, boards, sector organizations, and community partners
- Establishing a provider advisory group comprised of sector and housing provider leaders
- Repositioning policies and processes from compliance to capacity building
- Creating a comprehensive End of Mortgage tool kit to support housing providers in their EOM journey
- Encouraging housing providers to think strategically about their vision and long-term sustainability

Case studies of local outcomes for both Service and Exit Agreement negotiations that promote themes of partnership and autonomy will be examined.

Presenters:
- **Brittany Bridge**, Program Analyst, Regional Municipality of Waterloo
- **Brynn Harlock**, Housing Programs Advisor, Regional Municipality of Waterloo
- **Krista Scott**, Housing Programs Advisor, Regional Municipality of Waterloo

Session Descriptions & Speakers

2.4 **Reconciliation with Purpose, A Healing-Informed, Transformational, Collaborative, Framework to Become Urban Kin**

Room: TBC

Reconciliation with Purpose is a transformative framework, developed through research and collaboration with Indigenous experts, scholars, activists, and Elders in the southwest region, aims to heal the entire community. It brings Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners together in a safe space of shared wellness. The framework offers practical, culturally relevant solutions grounded in Indigenous values, teachings, and principles, guiding all actions, projects, and initiatives related to reconciliation. This session will provide valuable insights and tools for fostering reconciliation within our community across sectors.

Presenters:
- **Faith Hale**, Executive Director of Ska:na Family Learning Centre
- **Dr. Magdalena Smolewski**, Lead Researcher/Consultant, Women's Equity Business
- **Kim Godin**, Manager, Children's Services, County of Lambton
- **Melissa Fitzpatrick**, Manager, Ontario Works, County of Lambton

Session Descriptions & Speakers

BREAKOUTS #3

3.1 A) Inclusion for All: System Review of the Special Needs and Inclusion Supports & B) Quality Assurance and Compliance in Special Needs Resourcing

Room: TBC

Presentation A

Session description coming soon.

Presenters:
- TBC

Presentation B

Session description coming soon.

Presenters:
- TBC

3.2 A) Local Municipal Champion: Region of Durham: Building Collaborations for Responsive Mental Health and Social Care Supports and Services & B) Local Municipal Champion: Access to Integrated Care in Couchiching: A Partnership Between the County of Simcoe and Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital

Room: TBC

Presentation A

Join Family Services Durham (FSD), a division of the Regional Municipality of Durham's Social Services Department, as we discuss our comprehensive approach to delivering community-based mental health services. For nearly 50 years, FSD has been a cornerstone of support in Durham Region, offering affordable and no-cost counselling, psychotherapy, outreach, and case management services. Our multidisciplinary team is dedicated to stabilizing and strengthening individuals, couples, and families and meeting emerging needs through holistic, client-centered, trauma- and poverty-informed services.

Session Descriptions & Speakers

In this presentation, we will highlight our innovative programs designed to support vulnerable and marginalized populations, including accessible no-cost counselling for social assistance recipients; supports for adults with developmental disabilities; outreach mental health and addiction services for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness; support for older adults at risk; rural access initiatives; and services for those impacted by abuse. Discover how FSD leverages collaborations internally within the Social Services Department and with various community organizations, social services providers, and educational institutions, and learn about our commitment to making mental health services more responsive and accessible for the most marginalized populations. Don't miss this opportunity to gain insights into effective community mental health strategies and the power of collaboration in driving positive change. We look forward to sharing our journey and innovative practices with you!

Presenters:
- **Rachel Hirstwood-Judd**, Supervisor Adult Protective Services (APS) and Outreach Teams, Durham Region
- **Stacey MacNeil**, Manager Intake, EAP and Specialized Services / Emerging Services Lead, Durham Region

Presentation B

In this presentation, representatives from both the County of Simcoe and Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital (OSMH) will discuss how a partnership between health care and municipal government, addressed a critical gap in healthcare access for unattached patients. Through a shared vision and commitment to breaking down pre-existing silos between health funded agencies and municipal government, this initiative resulted in a unique model of care that provides access to vital healthcare services for unattached residents, with a particular impact on vulnerable groups.

This initiative provides chronic disease management, primary care, and cancer screening; essential services that were previously inaccessible in a community with no walk-in clinics and limited alternatives beyond OSMH's Emergency Department. The model's success garnered provincial recognition as a pioneering approach to unattached care in Ontario, which ultimately secured sustainable funding for the Couchiching Ontario Health Team (COHT) to expand this model and enhance healthcare access for the broader community.

Learn how the partnership was derived, early challenges experienced as a result of a multisectoral approach, and also the successes realized from a model that reinforces the importance of municipal partnership in healthcare innovation.

Session Descriptions & Speakers

Not only will you hear of the highlights of the effective partnership between the Orillia Soldiers Memorial Hospital, the Couchiching OHT, and County of Simcoe, but you will also gain insights on how Ontario Health Teams can provide integrated, accessible, and community-centered healthcare solutions that truly transform care delivery within your local communities.

Presenters:
- **Melanie Moore**, Director, Planning & Patient Access, Orillia Soldiers Memorial Hospital
- **Andrew Scavarelli**, Director, Community Support & Wellbeing, County of Simcoe

Sponsored by the County of Simcoe.

3.3 **A) Building Bridges: Addressing the Housing Crisis for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities: A Municipal Perspective & B) Building Bridges: Collaborative Housing Solutions for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

Room: TBC

Presentation A

Session description coming soon.

Presenters:
- TBC

Presentation B

Session description coming soon.

Presenters:
- TBC

Session Descriptions & Speakers

3.4 Presentation TBC

Room: TBC

Session description coming soon.

Presenters:
- TBC

2025 AWARDS BANQUET

Room: TBC

As part of the Exchange Conference festivities, OMSSA is pleased to announce the Awards Banquet will return for 2025. The Awards Banquet is an opportunity to recognize our OMSSA Awards recipients and to gather for an evening to celebrate as a sector. As we get closer to May, we will offer more information on our Awards Banquet, in addition to our exciting program and confirmed speakers.

Champion of Human Services - Adrienne Jugley

Adrienne's early days were spent in the addictions sector, followed by several leadership roles in Public Health including Manger of Mental Health and Director of Clinical Services. Her final nine years of her career, Adrienne served as the Commissioner of Community Services where she was committed to serving the most vulnerable people in the Niagara community from infant to senior. In this role, Adrienne envisioned Niagara Region as a strong community where individuals are supported to maximize their potential, achieve their goals, and enhance their quality of life and social well-being. She truly believed in this philosophy and was a key contributor to numerous community initiatives and Regional developments.

Lifetime Achievement Award - Katherine Chislett

From 2017 to 2024, Katherine served as Commissioner of Community and Health Services for York Region and as President of Housing York, Inc., overseeing a $1 billion budget, 3,000 staff, and more than 300 programs that support York Region's residents. Under her leadership, York achieved numerous strategic and service plans, including the region's first Community Safety and Well-Being Plan and the York Region Inclusion Charter, recognized by the United Nations. Katherine's focus on integrated service management and her dedication to equity and inclusion have enriched the lives of over 1.2 million residents.

Session Descriptions & Speakers

Young Leader Award - Kendra Habing

Kendra Habing is a Decision Support Advisor for Halton Region with nearly a decade of experience in research, strategic planning, and community partnership building. She holds a Master of Public Health and leads the work of Halton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, providing critical support to enhance program effectiveness and community outcomes.

Local Municipal Champions Award

We will recognize outstanding teams who have advanced excellence in service integration and service system management:

- City of Brantford: Community Resource Navigation Pilot
- City of Windsor: Windsor-Essex Registered Early Childhood Educators Campaign (WERECE)
- County of Renfrew: Mesa - A Collaborative Approach to Compassionate Care
- Access to Integrated Care in Couchiching: A Partnership between the County of Simcoe Ontario Works and OSMH
- Northumberland County: Early Years Employment Initiative
- Region of Durham: Family Services Durham
- Region of Peel: Stability Supports Program

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

OPENING REMARKS

Room: TBC

Land Acknowledgement and Opening Remarks:
- **TBC**

BREAKOUTS #4

4.1 **A) Welcoming the Rainbow: Creating Resources for 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion in Children's Programs & B) "Embracing Black Hair" Beauty Salon & Barber Shop**

Room: TBC

Presentation A

The Welcoming the Rainbow project is designed to support staff working in children's programs to be safe, welcoming, and celebratory of 2-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, and sexual and gender diverse (2SLGBTQ+) children and families. This workshop outlines the multi-phase community-based research and resource development project, as well as shares copies of the materials that were created.

Presenters:
- **Bernice Chau**, Policy Development Officer, Children's Services, City of Toronto
- **Bethany Zack**, Policy Development Officer, Children's Services, City of Toronto

Presentation B

Western beauty standards have shaped what we perceive as beautiful; this is reflected and reinforced through representation and different forms of media. This not only limits the opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate Black hair, but Black hair styles, textures, and accessories have also been discriminated against through stigma and bias. Black hair is often perceived as unprofessional, unkept and inferior to Western standards, leading to negative perceptions of identity and self-esteem. (continued on next page)

ECEs are one of the first contacts that children have in learning about equity; they change narratives and undertake learning that breaks down barriers. By providing literature, play materials and experiences, they create positive representation for children. Increasing access to high-quality programs with culturally appropriate learning objectives for Black children and youth also ensures programs reflect the diversity of the communities where we deliver service.

The B&B Shop Programming Resource is a tangible resource that celebrates Black Joy and provides culturally appropriate programming for children and families. It provides materials that celebrate Black hair, giving children the opportunity to discuss different Black hair styles while learning about their hair, culture and identity. Materials that celebrate Black hair allow children to see themselves and challenge Western beauty standards that contribute to harmful and negative stereotypes. When Black children are taught to embrace their natural hair, they are also being taught to celebrate their identity, culture, and self-esteem.

Presenters:
- **Courtney Sarpong**, Centre Supervisor, Children's Services, City of Toronto
- **Windelyn Ortal**, Centre Supervisor, Children's Services, City of Toronto

4.2 Growth by Design: Expanding Not-For-Profit and Public Child Care

Room: TBC

This session will provide an in-depth overview of key insights from Child Care Now's multi-year project on child care expansion, funded by the federal Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Fund. The presentation will examine barriers and facilitators affecting the ability of public and non-profit providers to expand licensed early learning and child care services. It will also highlight the critical role of local governments, school authorities, and Indigenous governing bodies in supporting this expansion.

The session will conclude with an interactive discussion on potential systemic changes needed to build capacity, meet expansion targets, and ensure operators can deliver high-quality, sustainable programs for children and families.

Presenters:
- **Morna Ballantyne**, Executive Director, Child Care Now
- **Jane Beach**, Early Childhood Education and Care Research and Policy Consultant

4.3 Celebrating Success in Life Stabilization: Opportunities for Collaboration and Learning

Room: TBC

What is life stabilization? What are person-centred supports? What makes a complex case? How can we provide meaningful referrals? What does referral-ready mean? What does success look like? How can we celebrate successes?

Being grounded in what activities and resources assist individuals in moving forward is key to being able to assist and celebrate the progress of individuals, towards independence and self-sufficiency.

As we consider person-centric strategies, we need to lean into consistent documentation practices that are both ethical and efficient.

Presenters:
- **Kirby Steinhoff**, Consultant, integrative consulting inc. and OMSSA Trainer
- **Chris Kindy**, Case Manager, Haldimand Norfolk Health and Social Services

4.4 A) Addressing NIMBYIsm in Transitional Housing Projects & B) Approaches to Effective Communication and Advocacy

Room: TBC

Presentation A

To respond to increasing homelessness and the lack of transitional and supportive housing models in Durham Region, the Region developed two new transitional housing projects: a 10-unit microhomes site in Oshawa and a 47-unit site with a community hub in Beaverton. While both sites experienced community concerns and strong opposition, they are now operating with minimal community concerns, helping residents to feel part of the broader community. This presentation will share our experience in developing transitional housing , focusing on the strategies used to combat NIMBY sentiments, building trust and relationships with program participants, working collaboratively with service providers to address any concerns, and maintaining positive relationships with our neighbours.

Presenters:
- **Lynn Alexander**, Property Manager of the Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation, Region of Durham
- **Jackie Quinn**, Property Manager of the Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation, Region of Durham

Presentation B

Session description coming soon.

Presenters:
- TBC

4.5 A) Local Municipal Champion: County of Renfrew: Mesa - A Collaborative Approach to Compassionate Care & B) Navigating Housing Instability: Strategies for Supporting Clients with Complex Needs

Room: TBC

Presentation A

Mesa was designed as a coordinated and integrated approach to address the intersections of the mental health and addiction, housing and homelessness crises. It is an innovative and evidence-informed collaborative model that focuses on compassionate, trauma-informed care and local needs. Craig Kelley, Chief Administrative Officer for the County of Renfrew, recognized a need for members of his Senior Leadership Team to change their practices, break down silos, integrate service delivery, and work collaboratively. Without this leadership, things would have remained status quo, and Mesa would not have evolved into what it is today. This inter-departmental municipal approach aligns Emergency Services, Community Services and Development and Property resources with community partners' expertise and programs.

The Mesa team works collaboratively to coordinate services and navigate a pathway for vulnerable community members to receive the right support and resources at the right time and in the right place. The Mesa user experience is being tracked and measured with a priority on real-time, person-specific data in a way that respects privacy. We coordinate data, case management and shared consent, building a structure and pathway for Mesa to be woven into our municipal and partner system structures. Client confidentiality is a priority and balanced with the need for data sharing to support person-centred, coordinated care. In the moment of crisis, Mesa team members respond to a person's immediate needs, fill the gap and then work towards building a system that provides a seamless, wrap-around approach to caring for people in an intertwined crisis of addiction, mental health and housing. The flow, timeliness and tracking of support is critical to a person's success.

The impact that Mesa is having on our most vulnerable populations and our structural systems is profound. It diverts calls from high-cost emergency department trips, saving lives and providing appropriate, compassionate care in the community. Mesa demonstrates success through diversions, avoiding hospitalization, providing appropriate and local mental health and addictions interventions and prioritizing housing. Through the collaborative approach there has already been a notable increase in coordination of care. The Mesa team has built trust and connection with our region's highest risk population. Mesa works collaboratively with clients and multi sector service partners, including health, social, private sector developers, plural sector, not for profit, financial, legal and community expertise, to coordinate immediate access to health, social, financial and housing needs. Together, we determine what is possible.

Presenters:
- **April Muldoon**, Manager of Community Supports, County of Renfrew
- **Barb Tierney**, Mesa Coordinator, County of Renfrew

Presentation B

Session description coming soon.

Presenters:
- TBC

BREAKOUTS #5

5.1 A) The Power of Stay Interviews: A Key to Unlocking Employee Engagement and Retention & B) Building Workforce Sustainability in Child Care and Early Years: A Collaborative Approach Between the Region of Waterloo and Ryelle Strategy Group

Room: TBC

Presentation A

In today's work environments, understanding what drives employee engagement is crucial for organizational success. This presentation will delve into the powerful tool of Stay Interviews. Through the real-life example of how the Children's Service Division in Durham Region implemented Stay Interviews, participants will:

- Discover the benefits and best practices for conducting effective stay interviews that build trust
- Learn how chose meaningful questions
- Explore methods to address feedback and improve employee engagement

Join us to enhance your approach to employee engagement and fostering a positive organizational culture.

Presenters:
- **Lauren Waugh**, Program Manager, Policy and Strategic Initiatives, Children's Services Division, Regional Municipality of Durham
- **Melissa Beaucaire**, Manager, Children's Services Division, Regional Municipality of Durham

Presentation B

This presentation, co-delivered by the Region of Waterloo and Ryelle Strategy Group, explores a collaborative journey taken between the Region and a consulting firm to tackle workforce challenges in the Early Years sector. Centered on co-creation, third-party facilitation, and strategic prioritization, the session highlights how these approaches shaped a sustainable workforce strategy and assessed the impacts of the Region's workforce investments.

Beginning with the Region's commitment to addressing recruitment and retention challenges, the presentation showcases how diverse stakeholder input—gathered through surveys, focus groups, and interviews—ensured the strategy was inclusive and grounded in real experiences. Engaging educators, supervisors, and operators provided critical insights that informed meaningful outcomes.

Ryelle's role as a neutral third-party facilitator is emphasized, illustrating how their best-practice approach enabled transparent evaluation and unbiased recommendations. Key findings, including the creation of a prioritization chart, will be leveraged as a tool for short- and long-term workforce planning.

The session reinforces best practices such as tailored professional development, strategic partnerships, and equity-focused initiatives, demonstrating their integration into the Region's work to strengthen recognition, collaboration, and advocacy. The session will round out with the Region's demonstration of how the outcomes of the project are being implemented.
This presentation offers a replicable model for workforce development, combining innovation and collaboration to inspire participants to address workforce challenges in their own organizations.

Presenters:
- **Kim Sangüesa**, Manager, Partnerships, Quality and Accountability, Children's Services, Region of Waterloo
- **Ashley Pettifer**, Director, Client Experience and Operations Ryelle Strategy Group

5.2 Advancing Health Equity in Housing and Child Care Settings: Opportunities to Improve Through Collaboration Across Sectors

Room: TBC

This session will feature opportunities to collaborate across sectors and adopt promising practices to improve conditions and advance health equity on two important issues facing municipalities across Ontario: (1) quality of housing and (2) the need for safe and health-promoting child care environments.

For over two decades, the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (CPCHE) has fostered intersectoral collaboration to improve the environments in which children grow, focusing on homes and learning (i.e. child care and school) settings.

Housing: Maintaining and improving the quality of existing rental housing is essential to address the housing and homelessness crisis, improve health equity and realize the right to adequate housing. We will highlight practical opportunities and available resources to improve housing conditions by discussing the work of RentSafe, an intersectoral initiative, led by CPCHE, that aims to address unhealthy housing conditions affecting tenants living on low income in urban and rural communities in Ontario.

Child care: With the shift to universal $10-a-day child care, there is growing demand and a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create healthy and sustainable early learning spaces that actively promote child well-being, with a key role for municipalities given their oversight role for licensed child care. Drawing on CPCHE's Public Health-Child Care Sector initiative to advance children's environmental health equity in child care settings, and with an interactive demonstration of the CPCHE Healthy and Sustainable Child Care Checklist, we will share promising actions to build awareness and capacity across sectors to protect and promote children's environmental health.

Presenters:
- **Geri Blinick**, RentSafe Project Manager, Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment.
- **Helen Doyle**, Environmental Health Work Group Chair, Ontario Public Health Association.
- **Erica Phipps**, Executive Director, Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment.
- **Darryl Wolk**, Manager, Policy Development and Public Affairs, Ontario Municipal Social Services Association.

5.3 A) Homelessness and Community Response Teams in Durham Region, A Continuum of Support & B) Key Lessons Learned from the Grey Bruce Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

Room: TBC

Presentation A

Session description coming soon.

Presenters:
- TBC

Presentation B

The CSWBP presentation highlights the collaboration approach required to create safer, healthier communities and meet the requirement in the Community Safety and Policing Act that requires all Municipalities to develop and adopt a CSWB. The presentation will provide an overview of the CSWBP framework, emphasizing the importance of proactive, data-driven planning that addresses local needs through inclusive partnerships and actionable strategies.

A key feature of the presentation is the integration of 5 action tables, focusing on mental health, addictions/substance use, crime prevention, poverty/income and housing/homelessness. Our Situation Table will also be discussed, showcasing our successful model for rapid, multi-sector responses to situations of Acutely Elevated Risk. Partners from various sectors including healthcare, education, law enforcement, social services, First Nations, Indigenous organizations and advocacy groups, play a critical role in shaping our CSWBP. By collaborating, these stakeholders can leverage their collective knowledge and resources to develop targeted strategies that meet the unique needs of diverse populations including, Indigenous peoples, rural residents, and equity-deserving groups.

The presentation also explores how our community wide survey informs planning by providing a snapshot of local priorities, challenges, and opportunities. This survey gathers input directly from residents, ensuring the CSWBP reflects their lived experiences. Furthermore, we will discuss our lived experience groups, such as the Peer Advisory Committee through our Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy who have lived experience with substance use and provide their perspectives.

Presenters:
- **Alexis Cook**, Grey Bruce Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Coordinator, County of Bruce
- **Jane Hartley**, Executive Director, Victim Services Bruce Grey & Steering Committee Member, Grey Bruce Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

5.4 A) People, Process, and Paper: Evaluating Toronto's STARS Supports Assessment Tool & B) Using a Data-Driven Prioritization Method to Support the Launch of Needs-Based Portable Housing Subsidies

Room: TBC

Presentation A
The Service Triage, Assessment and Referral Support (STARS) Supports Assessment Tool is used to connect people experiencing homelessness with housing and supports available through Toronto's Coordinated Access system by assessing the supports they may need to maintain their housing. The tool was co-developed by Toronto's two Community Entities, Toronto Shelter & Support Services (TSSS) and the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (ALFDC), together with Indigenous sector partners, frontline staff, and people with lived experience. The tool takes a wholistic approach and does not use numerical scores. The tool was piloted in 2022 and an evaluation of the pilot was conducted by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, Hub Solutions, in 2023. The findings showed content components like identifying support-need areas are important to an effective matching process, and that process components like trust and relationship-building are equally necessary.

This session will provide key learnings and offer an opportunity to brainstorm solutions to common challenges in the sector.

Presenters:
- **Yasmine Abu-Ayyash**, Senior Research and Evaluation Coordinator, Hub Solutions, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
- **Stephanee Doucett**, Reaching Home Manager, Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle
- **Alison Kooistra**, Policy Development Officer, Toronto Shelter & Support Services, City of Toronto

Presentation B

Peel Region's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan aims to change how regionally funded housing supports are allocated, prioritizing households using needs-based criteria rather than chronological order. We describe the results of a pilot project that allocates prevention-based portable housing subsidies to households on the centralized waitlist for subsidized housing. Peel's Housing Services division has developed a model that uses data from Statistics Canada and internal routinely collected administrative data to target the limited number of subsidies available to households in the most acute need. Specifically, we model the probability that a household is in Core Housing Need and use these modelled probabilities to prioritize allocation. We provide a comprehensive explanation of the model and the policy it serves, presenting the relevant statistical, logistical, and programmatic details.

We also describe the many challenges encountered during the deployment of the model and present the results of our evaluation of the model's efficacy. Our work is informed by the burgeoning academic and applied literature on the risks of algorithmic decision-making in high-impact contexts and we contrast our model with other potential methods of subsidy allocation. Finally, we discuss the potential utility of our model in other contexts.

Presenters:
- **Daniel Rowe**, Specialist, Housing Analytics, Housing Services, Peel Region
- **Ria Sutton**, Program Analyst, Client Services, Housing Services, Peel Region

5.5 Inner Outer Change: Conscious Leadership and Self-Reflection for Leaders in Human Services

Room: TBC

Workers in the social services navigate many complexities and pressures and need tools to support them in being conscious, compassionate, and skillful in the workplace. This introductory overview presentation will provide self-reflective tools and meaningful exercises to help participants to develop their capacity to align their vision and values, deepen their ability to be self-reflective and to better contribute to building healthy workplaces.

This presentation will guide participants to learn about their selves, their depth of communication, their histories, their relationship to trust, and their patterns of collaboration. It will also explore the concepts of conscious leadership, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and psychological safety, all while centering these concepts in equity and social justice. Based on theories of trauma-informed practice, internal family systems, conscious leadership, and mindfulness, this presentation will also provide a brief overview of these theories and their significance in a self-reflective practice.

Lead by a clinical consultant, therapist, and social work professor, this presentation will be interactive, experiential, and will grapple with questions such as: What are the qualities and skills you want to incorporate or integrate as a human services provider? What are the values you want to align yourself with? What are the emotional skills that would support your vision? "Love and justice are not two. Without inner change, there can be no outer change. Without collective change, no change matters." - Rev. angel Kyodo williams

Presenters:
- **Karine Silverwoman**, Consultant and Social Worker, Karine Silverwoman Consulting

CLOSING PLENARY

TITLE TBC

ROOM TBC

Session description coming soon.