

Hamilton City Council Candidate Survey

Mental health has never been as important as it is now.

As a candidate for Hamilton City Council (HCC), we here at the YMHM Canada ask that you please complete the following survey to the best of your ability regarding mental health and what you would work to do to ensure mental health in Hamilton if you are elected this October.

Your answers as well as your name and ward, as well as your answers will appear on our website at ymhmcanada.ca/Hamilton.

Sections

1. Mental Health in Youth
2. Mental Health in Marginalized Communities
3. Mental Health in Seniors
4. Mental Health Supports and Services
5. Addiction Supports and Services

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Mental Health in Youth

A report by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health found that about 27% of students between grade 9-12 reported poor mental health and 16% seriously considered suicide in the past year. If elected, what are you going to do to ensure better mental health within not only highschools within Hamilton, but all schools?

Mental health is a concern of mine. I would contact all school trustees in Ward 11 and form a committee to get our youth the help they need from all levels of government.

If elected, what would you advocate for to better ensure the mental health of youth in Hamilton?

If elected I would advocate that our health system ensures our youth are looked after much better than they are now. Open up our health system instead of neglecting them.

If elected, would you support the recommendations for youth mental health and addictions set out by the City of Hamilton Youth Strategic Plan that was created by HamOntYouth?

(<https://www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/strategies-actions/youth-strategy>)

If elected I would definitely support the recommendations set out by the committee. Youths are very vulnerable and need to be looked after. Anything I can do for youths I will be in their corner.

Mental Health in Marginalized Communities

Members of marginalized groups are at a higher risk for mental health-related disorders, suicide, and more. If elected, what are you going to do to help ensure the mental health of those in marginalized communities?

I would ensure that our public health system reach out to those in marginalized communities and give them the proper help that they require.

Indigenous rates of suicide can be as high as 9 times non-Indigenous peers, and LGBTQ youth can be as high as 14 times more at risk for suicide than straight counterparts. If elected, what are you going to do to reduce the rates of suicide within marginalized communities in Hamilton?

Indigenous people are very dear to my heart. Unfortunately these groups who have as higher risk of suicide need special care. I would make sure that the health system in collaboration with indigenous communities form committees to come up with a solution.

Mental Health in Seniors

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected the Senior population and has led to more people having feelings of depression and loneliness. If elected, what are you going to do to ensure the care of seniors and their mental health?

First and foremost I would approach senior levels of government along with my council colleagues and have them contribute their share of funding. Seniors are the most vulnerable human beings that each and every one of us should get together and raise money and awareness.

Older adults, men in particular, have among the highest suicide rates in the world according to the WHO. If elected, what are you going to do to help ensure the reduction of senior suicide and self-harm in our community?

If elected I would approach our Mayor and the rest of my colleagues to write the other two levels of government and see what funding is available for seniors, particularly men. Alongside our health system we can hopefully ensure that they get the help they so deserve.

According to CCSMH, substance misuse and dependency among older adults is a growing but neglected issue. If elected, what are you going to do to help ensure the reduction of senior substance misuse and/or dependency that could possibly lead to an overdose in our community?

Well seniors require constant help. Dependency on drugs for seniors is a serious matter that all family members and public health need to keep a close eye on. Especially with seniors having dementia and Alzheimer's.

Mental Health Services and Supports

If elected, what are you going to do to ensure that hospitals are properly supported by the city to provide help to people seeking mental health treatment or programs?

If elected I would approach our public health system who in turn would work with our hospital system. Money is always an issue. Therefore the two levels of government along with us municipally would be required to help financially.

Wait times in Hamilton for mental health services can be as long as 710 days. If elected, would you commit to working with all levels of government to ensure that people within your ward and Hamilton are able to access services within a shorter amount of time?

If elected I absolutely would approach our MP and our MPP in my Ward 11 to ensure that their governments commit to shorter waiting times.

The House of Commons has approved a National 988 Suicide and Mental Health Crisis Line (as of 2020). Do you support such a number and if elected, will you commit to working with all levels of government to help ensure such a number is implemented?

If elected I absolutely support the 988 line. With this number it means quicker access to mental health crisis help.

There are little to no supports for youth transitioning from youth mental health services to the adult sector. If elected, what will you do to bridge this gap in service for young people?

If elected I would make sure that we have enough counsellors to reach out and help these individuals. We definitely need the money for the resources we would require.

If elected, would you commit to working with and listening to mental health advocacy groups in Hamilton to help aid in giving input into mental health policies for the city?

If elected public health would be one of the first choices of committees to sit on. Poverty is affecting many, many people which in turn is effecting their mental state. I would love to sit in and discuss policy changes.

Addiction Services and Supports

If elected, would you commit to working with and listening to addiction and harm reduction advocacy groups in Hamilton to help aid in giving input into addiction policies for the city?

If elected I absolutely would commit to working with and listening to advocacy groups. I am a people person and I love helping people. First and foremost. Youth and seniors are at the top of my list.

Do you support safe injection sites in Hamilton and/or in your ward (if elected)?

If elected I absolutely do. Those that seek the help should definitely be provided safe injection.

According to the Office of the Chief Coroner, in Ontario up to and including 2020 acute drug toxicity has been the number one cause of death in youth 15-24 years old since 2017. Education about overdose prevention and response with naloxone, harm reduction, and how to use drugs safely can reduce the number of overdose-related deaths in young people as they will have the knowledge and tools to make informed choices about drug use. If elected, how will you ensure that highschool curriculum includes better education about substance use in a non-judgemental safe space?

If elected I would work with my school trustees in my Ward 11 to see how best we could resolve the issue regarding substance abuse.

Additional

Is there anything else that you wish to add?

I'm thrilled to be running for council because I am committed and dedicated to helping the most vulnerable. In all your questions you mentioned, youth, seniors, and indigenous groups. All very dear and close to my heart. Thanks for reaching out to me with your questions. I hope I answered them to the best of my ability.

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