

# 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](http://ymhmcanada.ca/Hamilton).

## Sections

1. Mental Health in Youth
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3. Mental Health in Seniors
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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?

Years ago, I served as Chair of the Hamilton Mental Health Associations Education Committee. It was a real education for me.

We need to do everything we can to end the stigma associated with mental health.

For 18 years I created and worked with both an Education Advisory Committee and a Post-secondary Advisory group. We often came to focus on mental health.

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

By working more intentionally to partner with local school boards, council colleagues and our two senior levels of government to raise awareness and provide resources needed to respond.

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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>)

Yes

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## 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?

Listen and learn and then use that learning as a springboard for action.

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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?

Again - become engaged and better aware of these challenges and work to turn things around.

## 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?

Part of our city's mission statement is to 'make Hamilton the best city to age in place.' We need to do much better. Focus on direct engagement with senior groups, including the city's Senior Advisory Group to develop and implement a strategy. Would like to work with your group.

Ps - the provincial government needs to stop cutting program funds.

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?

It's a matter of education and providing the resources (counselling and fiscal support) for anyone needing assistance.

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?

We can't look at this as isolation. Counselling centres and the like need to be providing (using provincial funding).

## 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?

The city doesn't 'provide hospitals' — the Province funds and, through legislation, causes hospitals to be properly managed (or not). They are doing a poor job (staff shortages, failure to properly fund etc.) and the city role needs to focus more intentionally on advocacy.

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?

Yea - of course.

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?

Absolutely

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?

There are many groups that work with young people. I am involved with a couple of youth groups. Mentoring, friendship and education has a lot of potential to assist in this regard.

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?

Yea - of course

## 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?

Yea - of course

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

Yes - in consultation with the community (ward) I represent. Again, education is critical. No one can foolishly (or arbitrarily) simply locate a safe injection site in any community.

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?

It's important to acknowledge that the city has a limited role in shaping high school curriculum which falls under the preview of our province and school boards.

Additional

Is there anything else that you wish to add?

Appreciate you launching this survey. Hope you'll use the information gathered to enhance our community's mental health.

