

# MENTAL HEALTH/ ILLNESS CARE AND SERVICES IN BC

## WHAT WE HEARD

### What was the goal of this member engagement?

With the rising prevalence of mental health issues in BC, there is a growing demand for care and services to meet a range of needs. Doctors of BC is in the preliminary stages of developing a policy statement that addresses the barriers and challenges patients face when accessing mental health care and services in BC.

To better understand members' clinical experience and perceptions of patient needs, we sought input on five priority areas to inform where we will focus our policy and advocacy efforts.

### How did we seek member input?

We sought member input via two tools—a survey and comment board—on our [Have Your Say online member engagement platform](#).

### What did we ask?



We asked members to rate the importance of each of five priority areas as high, moderate, or low.



We also asked for further input on each of these and other potential areas where we might focus our efforts.

### Who participated?

44  
registered  
members

**Type of practice**  
Family physician: 50%  
Specialist: 50%

**Practice setting**  
Community-based: 43%  
Facility-based: 16%  
Both: 41%

**Geographic setting**  
Urban: 66%  
Semi-urban: 14%  
Rural: 20%

# WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Respondents strongly agreed with our focus on the five identified priority areas. They identified barriers to access, including cost of services and gaps in integration, as the top priority to address in work to improve the provision of mental health care in BC.

## Members' ranking of key priorities:

- Reducing barriers to access (e.g., costs associated with accessing care) – 84% of respondents rated this as high priority.
- Integrated referral pathways and reducing fragmentation (e.g., gap in services for concurrent disorders) – 77% rated this as high priority.
- Mental health promotion and prevention across the lifespan (e.g., programs focused on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and early intervention) – 73% rated this as high priority.
- Addressing structural stigma (e.g., disproportionate impacts on certain populations) – 46% rated this as high priority and 34% as moderate priority.
- Data collection and an evaluation framework (e.g., outlining current wait times and benchmarks for access to care) – 39% rated this as high priority and 52% as moderate priority.

## In written comments, members mentioned additional focus areas they thought we should consider:

- Increasing mental health services targeted toward children and youth.
- Providing access to free and low-cost mental health services.
- Easier access to mental health care within primary care.
- Increased funding for group mental health care.
- Tools for integrating ACEs into clinical practice and in medical school training.
- Increases in remuneration for psychiatrists and family physicians who provide mental health care.
- Increased funding for the CBT Skills Society.

## WHAT'S NEXT

*Doctors of BC will use these findings to inform further development of a policy statement on mental health care and services in BC. This will include recommendations for action by government and stakeholders, and commitments by Doctors of BC regarding our efforts to support improved mental health care in BC.*