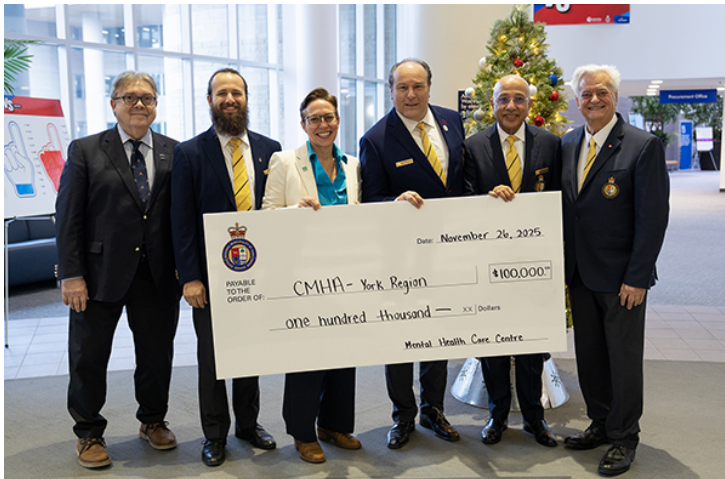


## Police Board makes significant investment in Mental Health centre



Work on York Region's Mental Health Community Care Centre will continue in 2026, and plans gained additional momentum this month with a \$100,000 donation from the York Regional Police Services Board.

Following a decision made on October 28, the Board has formally presented the investment to the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region and South Simcoe, which will operate the Mental Health Community Care Centre out of a building currently under renovation on Yonge Street, directly across from the Regional Headquarters in Newmarket.

The Centre is expected to open in 2027 and be a leading-edge facility providing support for individuals ages twelve and up experiencing mental health and addiction crises. The YRP has been a long-time supporter of the plans, as has the Provincial government.

"The Board recognizes CMHA York Region and South Simcoe's long-standing leadership in promoting mental wellness, community integration, and recovery from mental illness and addiction," said King Township Mayor Steve Pellegrini, who also serves as Chair of the York Regional Police Services Board. "Serving more than 20,000 individuals last year alone, CMHA continues to improve access to care, reduce wait times, and bring vital, compassionate support to underserved communities. We are proud to contribute funding for this transformative new centre for our Region, which reflects our ongoing investment into building a healthier, more resilient community."

Added Rebecca Shields, CEO of the CMHA-YRSS: "We are grateful for the partnership and support of the York Regional Police Services Board as we work with the community to develop and open the Centre. We know how important their role is in keeping individuals and the community safe, which is a huge asset to the Centre. Working together, we can truly ensure someone's first mental health and/or addictions crisis is their last. We're thrilled to have the York Regional Police Services Board's support with this mission."

The York Region Mental Health Community Care Centre was announced by both the CMHA-YRSS and the Provincial Government in 2024 and work continues to transform the former Mission Thrift Store location on Yonge Street, just north of Eagle, into their vision.

"The Centre will deliver a full spectrum of services, including specialized treatments, peer support, clinical care, addiction and psychiatric services, and youth and family assistance to meet the diverse needs of the community," said the CMHA-YRSS in a statement. "It is estimated that two-thirds of the Centre's clients will be diverted from emergency departments, reducing system pressures, and improving overall healthcare accessibility in the Region."

?York Region has seen a rising dependence on police mental health services, including an average of 17 calls a day related to mental health. Police received more than 6,000 mental health calls last year, including repeat calls from 350 people classified as ?chronic users' of the department's services. Emergency room visits related to mental health and substance use in the Region are projected to rise by 63 per cent by 2029.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter