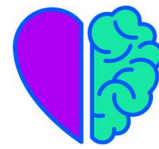




World Maternal
Mental Health Day
#maternalMHmatters



Perinatal Mental
Health Alliance
of Newfoundland & Labrador

For Immediate Release:

**Perinatal Mental Health Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador
Celebrates World Maternal Mental Health Day
Wednesday, May 5, 2021**

St. John's, Newfoundland, April 28, 2021: The [Perinatal Mental Health Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador](#) is celebrating World Maternal Mental Health Day on May 5. The Alliance is taking an opportunity to pause and give thought to the support provided to families who are undertaking the journey that can include fertility, pregnancy, loss, delivery and the time up to the infant's first birthday through a social media campaign on [Facebook](#) from April 30 – May 7, 2021.

"While this is a happy journey for most, there are many who face stress, illness and complications that can result in serious mental illness," says Dr. Archana Vidyasankar, member of the Alliance's Executive Steering Committee. "These issues can include serious depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder and psychosis. What's even more shocking is that suicide is a leading cause of perinatal death in Canada."

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH IN NEWFOUNDLAND & LABARADOR

It is estimated that, in Newfoundland and Labrador, 28% of new parents will experience a perinatal mood and anxiety disorder (compared with the national average of 23%). This means that approximately 1000 births per year in this province may result in mental illnesses, which could benefit from support and treatment.

Left untreated, perinatal mental illnesses can lead to premature labour, admission to the neonatal intensive care unit, increased risks of obstetrical complications, lower breastfeeding rates, and poor fetal and infant outcomes (potential cognitive, emotional and behavioral impairments). The cost of remediating these problems over the long term is estimated at about \$150,000 for each mother-child pair.

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH IN CANADA AND AROUND THE WORLD

Yet there are jurisdictions around the world that have addressed this issue and as a result have dramatically reduced the cost of delivering mental health care and needed supports. In Canada, Saskatchewan is the model jurisdiction. By providing targeted assistance, the cost of treating a mother-child pair has been estimated to decrease by as much as 95%, to \$5,000.

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH ALLIANCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

The key is universal screening and coordinated support and treatment. This is the mission that has been adopted by the Perinatal Mental Health Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Alliance is comprised of mental health counselors, nurses, physicians, social workers, early childhood specialists, policy advisors, as well as persons with lived experience who openly share their journey to improve care in the province.



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The Alliance has several province-wide objectives, including the following:

- to advocate for improved, coordinated, province-wide perinatal mental health programs, supports and services;
- to recommend community and research-informed strategies to address barriers to support and treatment;
- to raise public and professional awareness of perinatal mental health issues in the province; and
- to inform and educate the public and professionals about perinatal mental health issues.

The Perinatal Mental Health Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador is poised to make significant changes! Anyone interested in joining the Alliance is invited to visit <https://www.pmhanl.com>. From April 30 – May 7, the Alliance has a campaign on Facebook to support and celebrate perinatal mental health in Newfoundland and Labrador and can be found here:

[Perinatal Mental Health Alliance NL | Facebook](#)

#maternalmentalhealth

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