



EARLY PSYCHOSIS INTERVENTION  
ONTARIO NETWORK

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2021

## WHO WE ARE

EPION is a network of people who work in early psychosis intervention (EPI) services in Ontario, individuals who have received EPI services, and the family members and caregivers.

## OUR VISION

To build and support a network of provincial leaders that advances knowledge, provides advocacy, and promotes quality evidence-based care and support for people and families living with early psychosis.

## OUR MISSION

Promote rapid psychosis detection and access to care.  
Advance early psychosis intervention through research and knowledge exchange.  
Implement and advance the early psychosis intervention standards of care.



EPION actively engaged in a strategic planning process from September 2017 to January 2018. This included consultations with EPI program staff, family members and individuals connected to EPI services, our partners at the Provincial System Support Program (PSSP) located at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's (CAMH) and external allies and stakeholders.

**As the process unfolded, we realized some important things about the essence of EPION:**

- 1 We are a network. EPION members are the network.**  
 We remain a grassroots organization whose prime purpose is to support the delivery and reception of excellent clinical care within the evidence-based EPI standards of care.
- 2 We espouse the values of collaboration and partnership.**  
 The executive supports and enacts the decisions of the network.
- 3 There is a generosity of spirit within the world-wide EPI movement, with mutual mentoring, support and sharing.**  
 This is reflected in EPION.
- 4 There are time constraints.**  
 Our work takes place within a fine balance of professional services and volunteer contributions. We rely heavily on the generosity of many members who volunteer their time and expertise, and hold these contributions in high value. We recognize that this must be handled very respectfully so that volunteers do not get worn out.
- 5 There are financial constraints.**  
 While we are so grateful for EPION's annualized budget, we recognize that we operate within the constraints of a fixed budget, with costs that have risen over the last few years. We must provide effective stewardship of this funding. All plans need to be costed out and assessed for affordability.
- 6 We need to set priorities and be willing to let other things go.**  
 Given the constraints mentioned above we cannot 'do' everything, much as in our most energetic modes we would like to!
- 7 EPION has always been a nimble, flexible and responsive organization and it is important to maintain these attributes.**  
 Sometimes issues arise which will change our priorities and result in us having to shift focus.

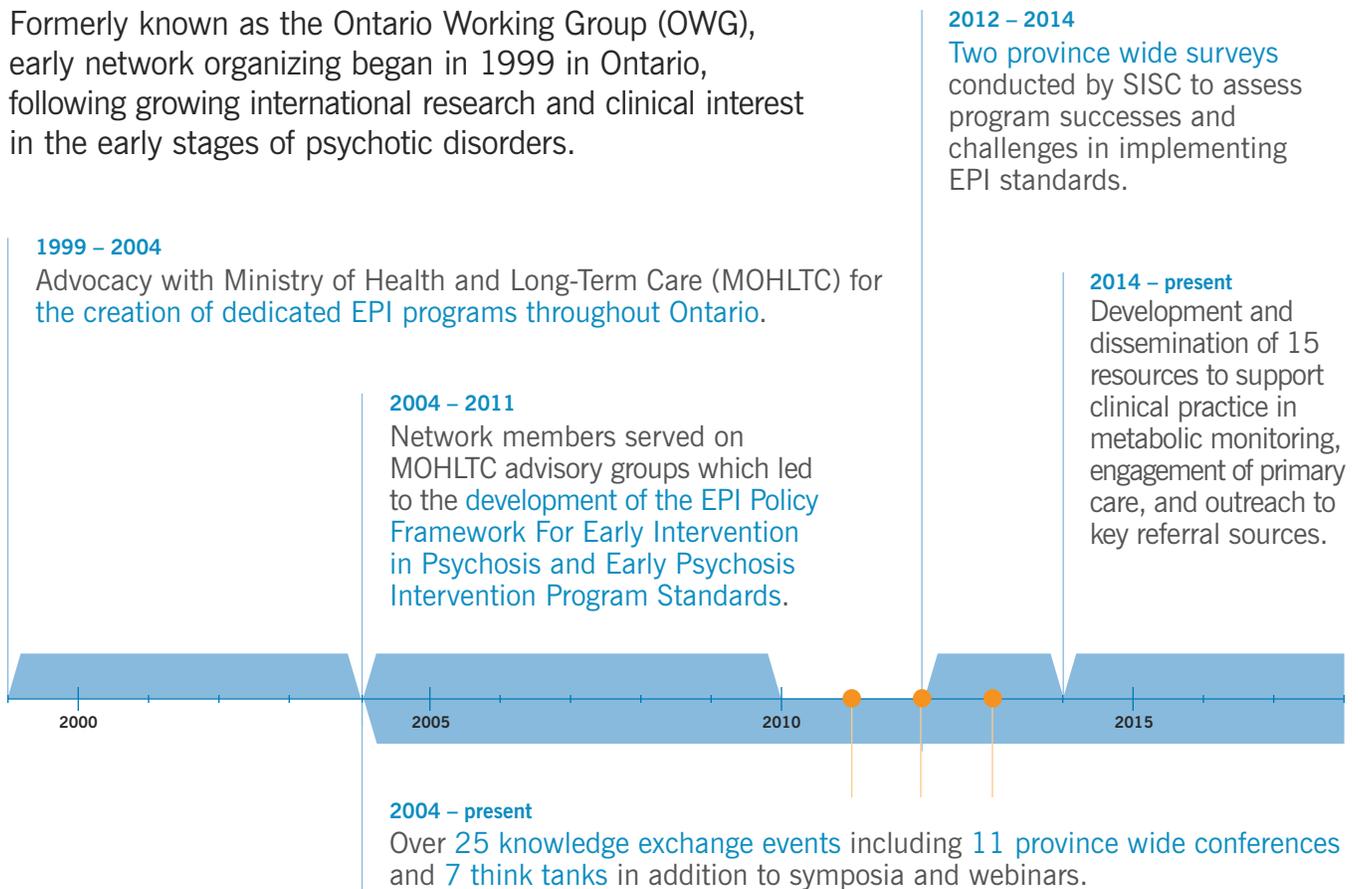
Thank you to all who shared their ideas with us during the preparation of this plan. We look forward to ongoing collaboration in strengthening early psychosis intervention in Ontario.

Heather Hobbs and Sarah Bromley  
 February 15, 2018

# EPION Milestones

## 1999–2018

Formerly known as the Ontario Working Group (OWG), early network organizing began in 1999 in Ontario, following growing international research and clinical interest in the early stages of psychotic disorders.



**2011**  
Standards Implementation Steering Committee (SISC) formed, bringing together EPION members, PSSP at CAMH, MOHLTC policy staff and representatives from Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) to develop an implementation, monitoring and evaluation plan for EPI programs.

**2012**  
Name change to Early Psychosis Intervention Ontario Network (EPION).

**2013**  
Annualized funding through MOHLTC begins.  
Additional working groups formed, to support activity in specific areas: metabolic monitoring, engagement with primary care and education sectors, public education, research, and event planning.

# Advancing EPION's Vision & Mission Through Four Pillars of Activity

1

**EPION  
COMMUNITY**

**GOAL:**

Strengthen connections among EPI programs, stakeholders and allies.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Offer a variety of ways for member programs to engage and share expertise. These may include online opportunities to share knowledge and resources; mentoring; and face-to-face knowledge exchange and learning.
- Implement a strategy for improved communications about EPION activities, opportunities and current issues.
- Identify and implement creative opportunities to work across regions to promote knowledge exchange between family members, service users and clinicians.
- Encourage EPI staff and allies to join the International Early Psychosis Association (IEPA) and become familiar with IEPA materials.

# 2

## EXCELLENCE IN EPI PRACTICE

### GOAL:

Strengthen EPI practice in line with the Ontario EPI Program Standards, current evidence, and best practice.

### STRATEGIES:

- Facilitate opportunities for professional development and knowledge exchange among EPI programs.
- Through fidelity assessments, identify gaps in EPI practice and challenges in service delivery and address through training, resource development, coaching and other means.
- Identify and promote a suite of standardized tools and resources that support evidence based practice and implementation of EPI standards in Ontario, including protocols to support implementation of new tools.
- Support the uptake and implementation of tools and resources developed by EPION, such as the suite of metabolic tools and resources for educators and primary care, through knowledge exchange, implementation protocols, and evaluation.
- Support programs in identifying opportunities to increase cultural awareness, enhance cultural safety in practice, and connect with diverse communities.
- Continue to bring service user and family perspectives into network meetings, events, workgroup activities and EPION communications and identify potential for EPION to support psycho-education for families province wide in collaboration with community partners.
- Facilitate a stakeholder dialogue around transitions of care, identifying implications for the EPI model, service delivery, care pathways, and systems level coordination to facilitate client flow to and from EPI services and easier access to EPI service.
- Enter into discussions with MOHLTC about a review of the Ontario EPI Standards with the goal being to update the standards in keeping with the latest evidence and current promising practices, including a recovery oriented focus and service delivery in youth friendly spaces.



**COLLABORATION,  
PARTNERSHIP,  
AND ADVOCACY**

**GOALS:**

Improve access to information and knowledge among key stakeholders with a view to:

- Prevention and early identification of psychosis
- Rapid referral to EPI services
- Collaborative community partnerships to meet family and service user needs.

Bring evidence to inform federal, provincial, regional and community decision-making related to identification, treatment and support for individuals with psychosis.

**STRATEGIES**

- Build recognition for EPION through online and social media presence.
- Enhance existing partnerships such as Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), Schizophrenia Society of Ontario (SSO), Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), International Early Psychosis Association (IEPA), NorthBEAT, Canadian Consortium for Early Intervention in Psychosis (CCEIP), Health Quality Ontario (HQO), School Mental Health Assist and the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH).
- Strengthen existing partnership with the Provincial System Support Program at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, which leverages its provincial structure to support EPION's mandate.
- Identify new partners for collaboration in systems level improvement, such as Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario, Ontario College of Family Physicians (OCFP), Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario (AFHTO), Association of General Hospital Psychiatric Services (AGHPS), family and service user networks in mental health and other provincial networks of EPI programs.
- Continue advocacy related to cannabis and psychosis education.
- Identify system issues and enhance the local voice of EPI programs in sharing expertise.
- Provide evidence and information to key allies and stakeholders.
- Promote EPI standards within ER, inpatient and other mental health services involved with EPI clients.
- Promote the inclusion of service user and family perspectives in advocacy and partnership initiatives.
- Identify public and professional education strategies that combat stigma and facilitate timely access to EPI services, including strategies to engage with primary care, educators, and youth directly.
- Advocate for and participate in systems level conversations about programs at capacity, program growth and sustainability, the need for secured and enhanced funding for new and existing programs, client flow in and out of service, inclusion and exclusion criteria and other issues impacting the future of client care.

# 4

## EPION GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION

### GOAL:

Build a strong organization to meet member and stakeholder needs.

### STRATEGIES

- Recruit volunteers for workgroups and leadership positions.
- Increase youth participation in working group activities and in the membership generally.
- Provide support for working group activities and demonstration of results and outcomes.
- Formalize and document internal processes and policies.
- Prepare annual work plan and budget to reflect strategic goals and priorities of the network.
- Conduct semi-annual and annual reviews of work plan priorities to ensure EPION remains nimble and responsive to emerging issues and opportunities.
- Assess the implementation of tools developed by EPION (e.g. metabolic tools, COI resources for educators and primary care.)
- Assess impact of EPION's work in knowledge exchange.
- Create a performance monitoring strategy that includes expanded and ongoing fidelity assessments in EPI programs.
- Oversee monitoring of expenses and financial management in accordance with conditions of funding.

EPI SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE IN 49 ONTARIO COMMUNITIES



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### CONNECT WITH US!

-  [help4psychosis.ca](http://help4psychosis.ca)  
[eenet.ca/initiatives/EPION](http://eenet.ca/initiatives/EPION)  
[eenetconnect.ca/g/the-epion-group](http://eenetconnect.ca/g/the-epion-group)
-  [info@epion.ca](mailto:info@epion.ca)
-  [@help4psychosis](https://twitter.com/help4psychosis)

EPION is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The Provincial System Support Program (PSSP) at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) leverages its provincial structure to support EPION's mission.