ADDICTION SERVICES CENTRAL ONTARIO (ASCO)

2025–2026
Annual Report

Developing, Driving and Advancing Hope,
Healing and Mental Well-Being



ADDICTION SERVICES
CENTRAL ONTARIO

helpwithaddictions.ca

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Call Toll-Free: 1 (800) 263-2288

Email: info@**help**with**addictions**.ca

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Jojit Labuntog

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Addiction Services Central Ontario (ASCO), it is an honour and a privilege to recognize a year of remarkable achievement and dedication to the communities we serve.

2025–2026 marked the second year of Addiction Services Central Ontario's Strategic Plan, Offering Hope and Promoting Well-Being, and we made significant strides toward realizing our vision: *A world where all people affected by addictions have the opportunity to heal.*

The 2025-2026 Annual Report shares stories of hope, courage, unity and compassion. These stories demonstrate how ASCO responded to the evolving needs of our communities while continuing to play a leadership role in addiction care across our region and beyond.

These accomplishments were made possible by our skilled and hard-working team, guided by the strong and steady leadership of our Executive Director, Penny Marrett. The Board is deeply grateful for - and inspired by - the dedication to our clients and the resilience that our staff team demonstrates every day.

We maintained a steadfast focus on developing our people. At the same time, we continued to drive system leadership, playing an instrumental role in initiatives such as the Black Mental Health and Addictions Program, designed to provide the best possible care to Black communities across York Region. ASCO also served as a strong advocate for addiction care within the Ontario Health Teams and at the provincial level. Our team advanced clinical and operational excellence through our continuum of services for adults, youth and families while we plan for new services to meet community needs, including a much-needed Day Treatment Program.

Addictions and mental health care are under tremendous ongoing pressure. I am incredibly proud of how our organization rose to every challenge and came together in support of our mission.

As my term as Chair comes to an end, I look to ASCO's future with confidence and optimism. I know our incoming Chair and the Board will provide the leadership and stewardship needed to guide the organization forward.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my deepest gratitude to all ASCO staff, volunteers, partners, and our funders, the Ontario Ministry of Health, Ontario Health, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and United Way Greater Toronto.

It has been an absolute privilege and pleasure serving as Chair for the past three years. Let us continue to stand together, inspired by our shared purpose, and move forward with courage and compassion.

With heartfelt thanks and optimism,

Jojit Labuntog
Chair, Board of Directors
Addiction Services Central Ontario



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Penny Marrett

As I reflect on a year of dedicated service, excellence and innovation at Addiction Services Central Ontario (ASCO), I am proud of the incredible progress our team has made in bringing healing, hope and mental well-being to thousands of individuals, their loved ones and the communities we serve.

The three priorities in our Strategic Plan are crucial to achieving our mission: *Uniting to support individuals to achieve their goals by offering hope and promoting well-being.* Everything begins with our first priority: **Develop** our people. Only by supporting, investing in and caring for our team can we achieve our other priorities: **Drive** system leadership in integrated care to improve access to programs and services; and **Advance** clinical and operational excellence.

The meaningful progress we have made in these priority areas during the last year – including planning for a new program – is the result of commitment, hard work and collaboration. Over the past year, we demonstrated what can be accomplished when we work closely with our partners to address the challenges the communities we serve face.

Our first-ever *Touch of Art* event showcased the work of six local artists, raised awareness about addictions and generated proceeds to support ASCO programs. ASCO also engaged with our community to stregthen addictions and mental health care across York Region. In partnership with the Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association (NACCA) and other Black-Led, Black-Serving and Black-Focused organizations, a series of Community Conversations took place in York Region with the Black Community. These conversations have resulted in a community-led action report that we believe will strengthen mental health and addiction services for Black communities in York Region.

We continue to operate in a challenging environment. Uncertainty in Canada and around the world and social isolation are also affecting mental well-being in our communities. The demand and need for addictions and mental health care continues to rise across the communities we serve in York Region, North Toronto and South Simcoe. There continues to be significant care gaps and barriers to mental health and addictions care, affecting Indigenous, Black, Newcomer and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, in particular. We know our resources are strained, which creates more pressure on our team. The compassion and dedication that each of our team members demonstrates each and every day for our clients and the communities we serve is more vital than ever before.

Our programs and services are oftentimes a lifeline to people affected by addictions and mental health. These are much-needed programs and services for our communities, without which there would be a significant increase in hospital emergency department visits and admissions. The work that is done in the community by ASCO and other community organizations is crucial to the stability of the health system overall. The Board and senior leadership are committed to continue to advocate for the additional resources we require to continue to offer these critical programs and services.

I have profound gratitude for all ASCO staff, volunteers, community and hospital partners, as well as our principal funders, Ontario Health and the Ontario Ministry of Health. I also thank our other funders, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, United Way Greater Toronto and the individual donors whose contributions have helped us to continue to support our clients and our work.

Let us continue our journey together by uniting to support individuals to achieve their goals by offering hope and promoting well-being.

With my deepest appreciation and gratitude,

Penny Marrett
Executive Director
Addiction Services Central Ontario

2024–2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

Offering Hope and Promoting Well-Being

Our Vision

A world where all people affected by addictions have the opportunity to heal.

Our Mission

Uniting to support individuals to achieve their goals by offering hope and promoting well-being.

Strategic Priorities

1. Develop our People
2. Drive System Leadership in Integrated Care
3. Advance Clinical and Operational Excellence



DOWNLOAD

ABOUT ASCO | 2025–2026

ASCO funds some programs and services that are offered by some of our community partners. This group of partners, known as the Wellness Collaborative Partners, is a collective of 7 organizations that work together to provide a wide variety of programs and services in York Region, South Simcoe, North York and Brampton.

17+
Programs & Services Offered

64,231
Total Group Interactions with Service Providers

36,752
Total Client Visits

4,655
Total Resident Days for Bed-Based Services

11,189
Total individuals Served

Top 3 Substances
Alcohol, Cannabis and Cocaine

Mirroring broader population trends, rates of harmful opioid use continue to rise, particularly among youth and young adult clients.

1,251
Total Group Sessions Offered

This data is from April 2025 to March 2026 and reflects the information to-date across all programs.

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS & MILESTONES

Voices of Clients and Families

One of the most important ways we receive candid and personal feedback from our clients and families is through anonymous surveys. We welcome all input, as hearing directly from those we are privileged to support allows us to continuously improve, build on what is working well, and find new ways to help clients to heal.

Here are just some of the voices from our surveys and that clients shared with us directly.



From the very beginning, I felt safe and oddly protected by these strangers who have never met me and know nothing about me. The ability to access these one-on-one counselling sessions and groups through Teams has been the most amazing gift to my journey of healing.

No judgement! Everyone I have dealt with is very friendly and supportive, I could be open and honest.

I received prompt care with a reasonable wait time when I first came into the walk in. Everyone is so caring, friendly, and knowledgeable.

Staff workers are always on hand for my needs. If they miss my call, they call right back. I have never been left hanging.

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS & MILESTONES

Highlights at a Glance

ASCO hosted an inaugural art event, *A Touch of Art*, to raise awareness and funds for addictions care. This community event featured works by mental health professionals and local artists. We are grateful to PD Diner in Aurora for their contribution and catering by 360°kids.

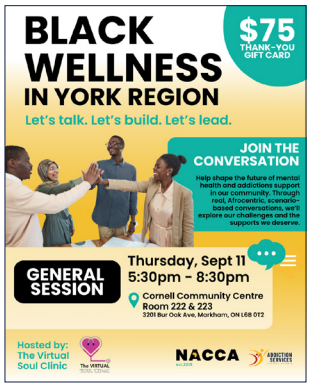






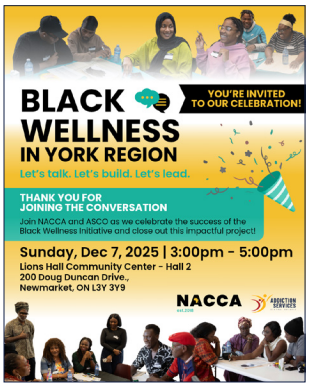


Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association, in collaboration with community partners and ASCO, led Community Conversations with Black communities in York Region to better understand the supports needed to strengthen mental well-being.









These Community Conversations were instrumental in the development and launch of a new program: The Black Mental Health & Addictions Program for York Region with a special focus on youth, offering addictions medicine, counselling and navigation.

PARTNERSHIPS

ASCO is profoundly grateful to the more than 20 organizations that have been integral to our progress together this past year. All our partners are very important to us, and we thank each and every one of them for their collaboration and commitment to the well-being of everyone we serve. Examples of this include the partnership with the Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association (NACCA) and with our Wellness Collaborative Partners.

Our partnership with the Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association

NACCA, ASCO and community partners understand that to meaningfully improve mental health and addictions care and outcomes in Black communities, there must be a commitment to intentionally work with Black communities on effective solutions.

As a charity dedicated to engaging African Canadians and allies to cultivate an empowered and united Black community, NACCA was the ideal partner to bring together the Black community to develop a community-informed report on the addictions and mental health needs of the Black community in York Region.

NACCA's Founder and Executive Director, Jerisha Grant-Hall, noted that many distinct and interconnected factors contribute to mental health and addiction challenges in Black communities and the challenges the community faces accessing care.

"The history of colonialism, Anti-Black Racism, systemic inequities all influence mental health and addiction in Black communities," says Jerisha Grant-Hall. "We knew that truly addressing these factors would require a targeted, collective approach led by community members."

With guidance from an advisory committee representing organizations serving York Region's Black communities, as well as a community elder, 235 people were engaged through workshops, focus groups and interviews. This work led to 19 key strategies to address systemic barriers and racism affecting the mental health and well-being of Black people in York Region.

The recommendations in the *Black Mental Health Community Insights Report* affirm that Black-led approaches to care and sustained collaboration among community organizations, service providers and funders are essential. The report and community-driven implementation plan will be released in the fall of 2026, following community engagement sessions held earlier this summer.

Priority actions will address the issues identified in the *Black Mental Health Community Insights Report*.

- Intersectional identity and code-switching (adjusting tone, vocabulary, body language or appearance to fit into different environments)
- Systemic barriers and anti-Black racism
- Cultural strengths and community-based healing
- Caregiving and intergenerational trauma
- Service gaps
- Shame, stigma, and stereotypes.

"ASCO's unwavering commitment to a community-centred and culturally responsive approach was essential," says Grant-Hall. "From the beginning, the ASCO team was committed to ensuring the recommendations were grounded in the lived experiences and needs of Black communities."

"For all the partners involved, the community's realities and perspectives were always front and centre," she adds. "Many voices contributed to this work, including community organizations represented on our advisory committee, mental health professionals and an elder who helped ground our work in its cultural and historical context. It took great professionalism, integrity and courage to do this work. I am very proud of the relationships we have built and the work ahead to improve Black mental health in York Region."

"The recommendations from this report about priority investments, making services more accessible and policy change will make a difference for generations to come," said Penny Marrett, Executive Director, Addiction Services Central Ontario. "ASCO is fully committed to collaborating with local Black communities, NACCA, and all partners to translate the report into real and meaningful change for individuals and families."







York Region Withdrawal Management Centre



Addiction Services Central Ontario (ASCO) embraces a holistic biological, psychological, social and spiritual approach to addiction – one that meets people where they are in their journey. For many, withdrawal management is an essential step in preparing for what comes next, whether that means beginning treatment, moving toward recovery or rebuilding social connections.

In response to rising substance use and increasing wait times for withdrawal management services in York Region, ASCO partnered with the Krasman Centre and Caritas School of Life to expand the continuum of care for people who need support with withdrawal. Established with vital funding from Ontario's Addictions Recovery Fund, the York Region Withdrawal Management Centre is one of the only fully publicly funded withdrawal management services in York Region.

Through strong partnerships, clients can also access enhanced services, including drop-in programs, peer support, counselling, case management, harm reduction and longer-term recovery supports.

According to the three executive directors – Penny Marrett of ASCO, Susan Dobson of the Krasman Centre and Maria Zigouris of Caritas – the Centre has been a game changer for addictions care in York Region. Its success comes from meeting people where they are in their individual journeys.

Each partner brings distinct expertise. ASCO provides clinical care and coordinates services around each person's needs. The Krasman Centre offers peer support from people with lived and living experience. Caritas supports clients pursuing longer-term treatment and recovery. Together, the partners provide evidence-based, individualized care that helps people access the right support when they are ready and prevents them from falling through the cracks.

"Recovery is not a linear journey, and no single approach works for everyone. The York Region Withdrawal Management Centre team provides people with what they need, when they need it, in an environment free from stigma," says Susan Dobson, Executive Director of the Krasman Centre.

For Caritas Executive Director Maria Zigouris, having Caritas staff in the same building, working alongside withdrawal management staff and peer supporters, makes all the difference.

"Providing access to one team in one location enables us to conduct timely assessments and offer support when clients are ready for longer-term treatment and recovery," says Zigouris. "The window to help someone enter treatment can be small. By working together in the same location, we can respond when people need us."

In addition to providing access to an array of high-quality clinical programs for people seeking support for substance use challenges, ASCO makes sure all services are well coordinated for each person.

"The harms caused by substance use is a very serious issue in the communities we all serve," says Penny Marrett, Executive Director of ASCO. "By making it easier for people to access a range of programs and services, we are improving their opportunity to receive effective treatment, move toward achieving their individual goals and make positive changes in their lives."

The three partners want the Centre to be available to everyone in the community who needs it. They are working to establish the York Region Withdrawal Management Centre as a permanent community resource and expand its operations from five to seven days a week, 24 hours/day, ensuring that support is available whenever people need it.

ASCO Team Participation in Regional & Provincial Tables

Beyond our strong local partnerships in York Region, North York and South Simcoe, ASCO is amplifying the voices of those affected by addictions and those working in the sector at regional and provincial tables. Here are highlights from 2025–2026:

Ontario Health

- Member, Oversight Table for the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence (Ontario Health)
- Co-Chair, Ontario Health Central Region – Central Mental Health and Addictions Planning Table
- Co-Chair, Ontario Health Central Region – Mental Health & Addictions System Transformation Advisory Table
- Member, Ontario Health Central Region – Health System Recovery and Transformation Table
- Member, Ontario Health Provincial Black Health Plan Committee
- Member, Care Delivery Partnership Committee for the York Region Mental Health Community Care Centre
- Member, Ontario Health Central Region Patient Access and Navigation Services Advisory Group
- Member, Ontario Health Central Region Black Health Plan Committee

Ontario Health Teams

- Co-Chair, North York Toronto Health Partners (NYTHP) Ontario Health Team (OHT) Stewardship Council
- Co-Chair, NYTHP OHT Mental Health & Addictions Steering Committee
- Chair, NYTHP OHT Health Equity Committee
- Co-Chair, NYTHP OHT Governance Committee
- Member, Toronto Region OHTs Navigation Committee (representing NYTHP OHT)
- Member, Eastern York Region North Durham (EYRND) OHT Executive Operations Team
- Co-Chair, EYRND Mental Wellness Steering Committee
- Member, Tri-OHT Community Partners Working Group
- Chair, Navigation Organization Working Group
- Co-Chair, North Western Toronto (NWT) OHT Governance, Nominating and Membership Committee
- Chair, NWT OHT Mental Health & Addictions Steering Committee
- Member, NWT OHT Best Practice Spotlight Organization Working Group
- Member, NWT OHT Client and Community Engagement Committee

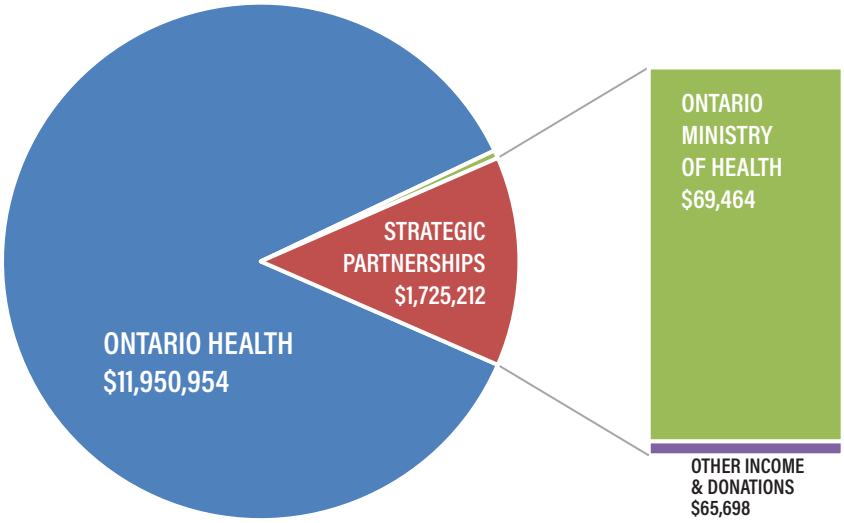
Community Planning Tables and Other Community Organizations

- Member, Situation Tables for South Simcoe and York Region (Adult and Children and Youth tables)
- Member, South Simcoe Service Resolution Table
- Member, Nottawasaga Opioid Advisory Working Group, Community Opioid Response Committee for York Region
- Member, York Region's Community Collaborative Table
- Member, Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee of York Region
- Member, United Way Greater Toronto Homelessness Service Providers Table
- Member, Harm Reduction Coalition of York Region
- Member, Community Opioid and Drug Response Collaborative
- Treasurer and Board Member for Addictions and Mental Health Ontario (AMHO)
- Member, AMHO Communities of Practice

ASCO continues to be actively involved in the following OHTs: Eastern York Region North Durham OHT, North York Toronto Health Partners OHT, North Western Toronto OHT, Northern York Region and South Simcoe OHT.

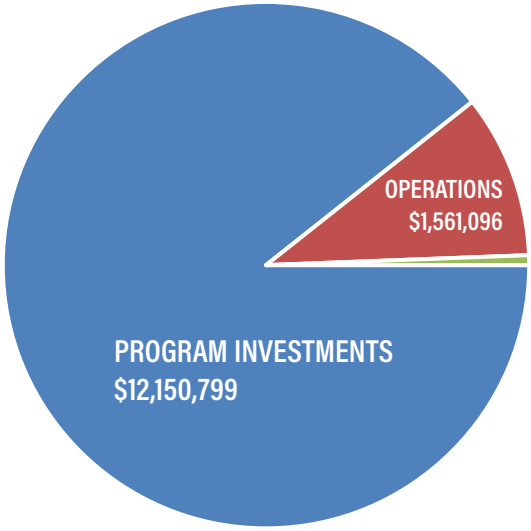
FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenue | **$13,811,328**



- Ontario Health ($11,950,954) - **87%**
- Strategic Partnerships ($1,725,212) - **12%**
- Ontario Ministry of Health ($69,464) - **1%**
- Other Income & Donations ($65,698) - **<1%**

Expenses | **$13,794,052**



- Program Investments ($12,150,799) - **88%**
- Operations ($1,561,096) - **11%**
- Professional Development & Amortization ($82,157) - **1%**

Full audited statements for the fiscal year that ended March 31, 2026 are available upon request.

ADDICTION SERVICES CENTRAL ONTARIO

14785 Yonge Street, Suite 210
Aurora, ON L4G 1N1
Phone: 905-841-7007
Toll Free: 1-800-263-2288

Fax: 905-841-6146
Email: info@**help**with**addictions**.ca
Web: **help**with**addictions**.ca

We have several Satellite Offices, Community Addictions Clinics & Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinics throughout York Region, South Simcoe & North York.

Visit our website @ **help**with**addictions**.ca or call us at 905-841-7007 or 1-800-263-2288 for more information.

Funding support for 2025–2026 provided by:

Ontario Health Santé Ontario

Ontario Trillium Foundation / Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario
An agency of the Government of Ontario / Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Ontario MINISTRY OF HEALTH

United Way Greater Toronto

We are also very grateful to the many individuals that have supported ASCO financially, through their volunteering and to the artists that freely donated works of art to support our inaugural art show, A Touch of Art.

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