

## NAPCRG 52nd Annual Meeting — Abstracts of Completed Research 2024.

**Submission Id:** 7053

### **Title**

*Changes in patterns and referrals of Nova Scotians' seeking mental health care through 2-1-1 Referral Service*

### **Priority 1 (Research Category)**

Healthcare Services, Delivery, and Financing

### **Presenters**

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### **Abstract**

Context: 2-1-1 is a designated phone help line in Canada and the US that provides referrals for individuals to local government and community-based services for a wide variety of needs, including social, health care, and mental health services. 2-1-1 Nova Scotia has operated since 2013 as a non-profit that offers 24/7 assistance. Use of 2-1-1 contact report data for mental health systems research has been limited, however it has the potential to reveal challenges associated with access to care and unmet community needs. While most health care data is generated based on people who access services, analysis of 2-1-1's caller data provides an opportunity to analyse the types and quantity of needs that people are looking to have met. Objective: Analyse the trends in mental health-related call volume and referrals over the study period, including changes that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic. Analyse mental health calls by caller type (individual, people seeking help for someone else, service provider) and explore how any identified patterns vary by location in province, gender, and age.

Study Design: Secondary analysis of an administrative dataset

Dataset: 2-1-1 Nova Scotia Contact Report dataset

Population Studied: Individuals who contacted 2-1-1 Nova Scotia from January 2013 to June 2023

Intervention/Instrument: N/A

Outcome Measures: Calls related to mental health

Results: An increase was seen in absolute number of calls related to mental health and proportion of total calls related to mental health, from 5,535 and 6% in the first six months of 2013 to 36,226 and 30% in the first six months of 2023. Males represent 48% of the mental health callers vs only 34% for non-

mental health calls. Adults, 35-54 years, represent 59% of the mental health calls, however only 41% of the non-mental health calls. A total of 111 mental health calls resulted in unmet needs since March 2020, with health zone 1 (a rural portion of the province) having the highest proportion of mental health calls with no referral. Conclusions: Data analysis depicts a substantial increase in Nova Scotians seeking mental health care, particularly beginning in February 2022. Adult males are the most likely demographic to seek mental health care through 2-1-1. Further analysis of the alignment of programs available and community needs, particularly for zones outside the major urban center, could improve access to mental health services for Nova Scotians.

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