



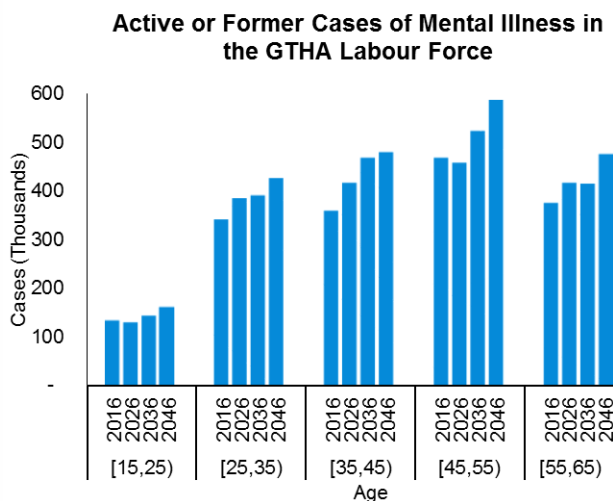
Mental Health in the Workplace: Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) Research

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The Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), represents 20% of Canada’s economy and has a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita that is 19% greater than the rest of Ontario. As a major role player in bringing together regional leaders to address the most pressing urban challenges in the GTHA, CivicAction is launching its first health-related initiative by focusing on mental health in the GTHA workplace. By increasing awareness and action among the GTHA’s employers and employees, CivicAction hopes to create a GTHA where residents’ mental well-being and productivity are fully realized. As part of the initiative, CANCEA was asked to model the scope of mental health issues in the GTHA labour force using its cutting-edge agent-based modelling platform, *Prosperity at Risk (PaR)*.

Mental Illness in the GTHA

Of the 3.2 million people currently in the GTHA labour force, it is estimated that over 1.5 million people (approximately 1 in 2) have experienced a mental health issue in their lifetime. Of those, 680,000 people (or 21% of the GTHA labour force) are estimated to currently have a mental health issue; while the remaining 995,000 (or 31% of the GTHA labour force) are people who previously experienced one.



Spectrum of Mental Health Issues: The prevalence of mental health issues in the GTHA labour force varies by condition. Furthermore, each mental health issue’s symptoms and prevalence can vary considerably depending on an individual’s age, sex, and risk factor exposure. In the current GTHA labour force, the prevalence of anxiety, mood disorders, substance use disorders, and schizophrenic disorders are estimated to be 10%, 5%, 8%, and 1%, respectively.

Mental Health Issue Projections: It is estimated that the number of people in the GTHA labour force with a mental health issue will grow from 680,000 in 2016 to just over 860,000 in 2046, a 27% increase.

Economic Impact of Mental Health Issues in the GTHA

The economic impact of mental health issues in the GTHA labour force is significant. Over the next 10 years, mental health issues in the GTHA labour force could result in an average annual loss of productivity of **\$1.7 billion**, or approximately **0.5%** of the GDP of the GTHA.

GTHA Mental Health Risk Factors

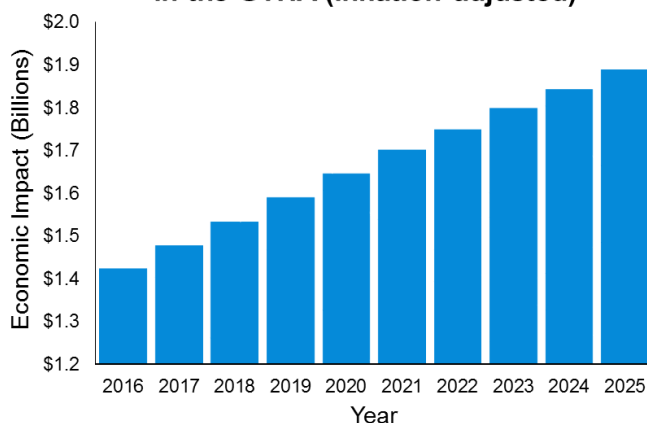
Part of the driving factors of mental health issues in the GTHA labour force are the challenges that these individuals face living and working every day. For example:

- ✿ **Shelter Affordability:** Access to adequate and affordable housing and mental health issues are intrinsically linked. With shelter affordability pressures at an all-time high, this has created stressors which can have a negative impact on families. Our preliminary analysis looking into housing affordability estimates that at least **1.2 million households in Ontario** (approximately one quarter) are under significant affordability pressure, spending just over 60% of their discretionary income on shelter costs.
- ✿ **Informal Care:** The unpaid support provided by family and friends to people with mental health issues (e.g., dementia) not only makes those caregivers more susceptible to mental health issues themselves, but it has indirect impacts on their productivity. It is estimated that in the GTHA over the next 10 years, labour force participants will provide **444 million hours** of informal caregiving to individuals with dementia alone; amounting to a total economic cost to the GTHA of **\$30.4 billion** (inflation adjusted) over the next 10 years, or about **2%** of the GDP output of the GTHA.
- ✿ **Child Care:** The price of child care for one child in the GTHA is estimated to be \$20,000 per year on average, higher than any other region of the country. This financial burden creates an environment in which low-income families are forced to pay unaffordable fees, or find (limited) alternatives.

Conclusions

Mental health issues in the GTHA labour force are a growing concern with an estimated 1 in 5 employees in the GTHA currently living with a mental health issue, resulting in an estimated average annual loss of productivity of \$1.7 billion (inflation-adjusted) over the next 10 years, or approximately 0.5% of the GDP of the GTHA. Moreover, daily challenges facing GTHA households such as shelter affordability, informal care, and child care, could be contributing to the problem.

Economic Burden of Mental Illness in the GTHA (inflation adjusted)



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