

# Annual Report 2023 - 2024



**CAPSA**

Bringing Expertise to Needed Systems Change



2435 Holly Lane, Suite 100  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1V 7P2

[www.capsa.ca](http://www.capsa.ca)  
[info@capsa.ca](mailto:info@capsa.ca)



# Letter from the CEO & Board Chair

Dear Friends and Partners,

As we reflect on the past year at CAPSA, we are filled with both pride and gratitude for the remarkable strides we've made in advancing Substance Use Health and dismantling stigma. This annual report offers a snapshot of our collective achievements, made possible through the unwavering commitment of our dedicated team, partners, and supporters.

This year, CAPSA has seen unprecedented engagement from organizations across Canada. We brought our evidence-based training to a record 47 organizations, impacting 1,789 individuals through our Stigma Ends With Me sessions and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Understanding the challenges faced by caregivers, we introduced the Practice of Compassionate Care – Staying Well While Helping Others. This initiative addresses the critical issue of compassion fatigue and provides practical tools for maintaining well-being. This new training has already led to significant partnerships and integration into organizational strategic plans.

CAPSA's impact is magnified through our collaborations with allied organizations and individuals. We have expanded our reach by partnering with health units, public safety bodies, and Indigenous organizations, embedding Substance Use Health principles into their strategies.

This year, we launched our first-ever toolkit designed to support Substance Use Health in workplaces. We are excited about the potential of this toolkit to create safer, more supportive environments for employees across various sectors.

Our commitment to impactful research remains steadfast. CAPSA's research efforts have been recognized both nationally and internationally, contributing to important debates and policy developments. Our findings, drawn from extensive surveys, focus groups, and evaluations, continue to shape the conversation around substance use health and stigma reduction.

CAPSA's role in co-leading system redesign activities and our participation in global forums, such as the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, highlight our dedication to systems change. Our partnership with Ontario Health and other bodies has been instrumental in advancing public health promotion and policy.

The success of our Bell Let's Talk campaign, featuring CAPSA prominently, and the continued growth of the Working on Wellness (WOW) festival are testaments to the increasing awareness and dialogue surrounding Substance Use Health. We are honoured to have reached millions through social media and engaged with thousands through our events and trainings.

We extend our deepest thanks to members of the board, senior leadership team, and staff, as well as our many partners and allies who have supported CAPSA's mission. Your partnership is invaluable as we continue to work towards a future where Substance Use Health is approached with understanding and compassion. Together, we are making a difference.

With sincere appreciation,



*Anthony Esposti*  
Anthony Esposti  
Chief Executive Officer



*Patrick Dion*  
Patrick Dion  
Chair of the Board

# Dismantling and Transforming Stigma – Changing Systems to Improve Care



Organizations across Canada continued, in higher numbers than ever, to engage with CAPSA's expertise as educators and leaders in dismantling substance use stigma. We brought our highly regarded and evidence-based training to numerous professionals in diverse sectors. Our interactive and engaging *Stigma Ends With Me* sessions bring solutions to organizations to eliminate stigma and facilitate lifelong learning. This year, we connected with 47 organizations, reaching 1,789 people. The immediate results of these training sessions were significant.

# Changing Systems to Improve Care

By connecting with these organizations, we were able to help staff identify how systemic stigma relates to their work, gain knowledge of new concepts, and build their confidence in applying a Substance Use Health approach to their roles.

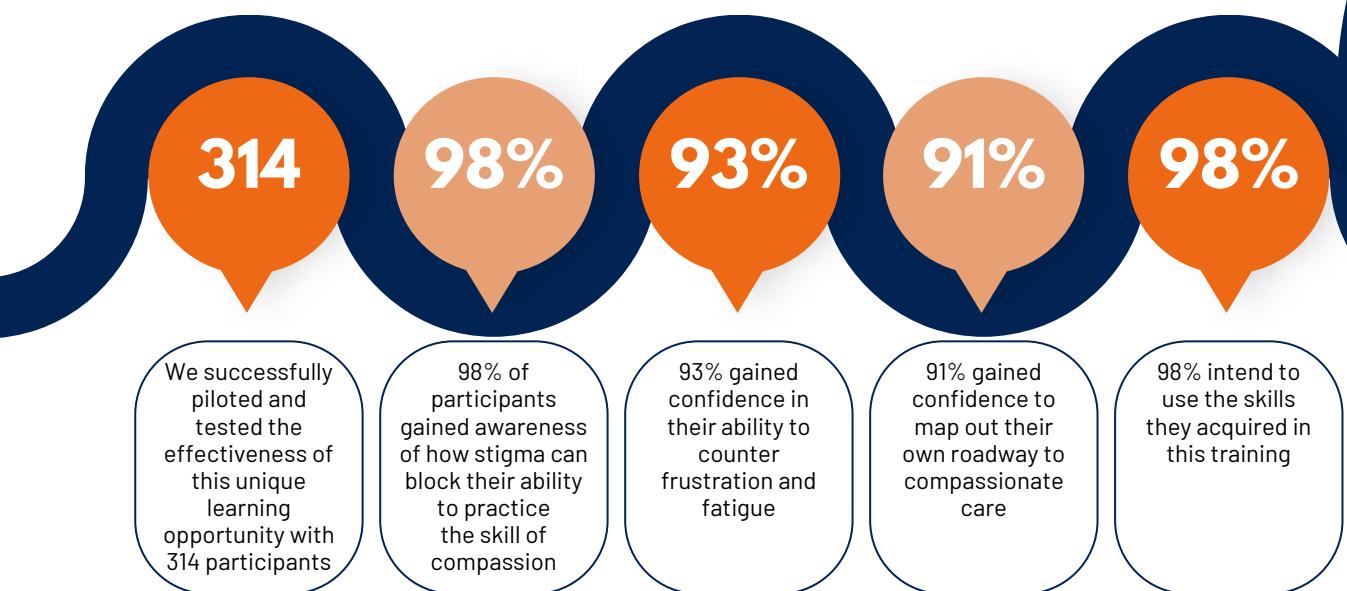
Survey results indicate that 97% of people intend to use the knowledge and skills and 99% felt that our material was relevant and accessible. The impact continues, where 98% of organizations that we followed up with after 3-6 months had used the skills they learned in our trainings and 100% have adopted the Substance Use Health approach into the organization.

Training is the foundation of partnership building. These sessions have led to expanded partner engagements, requests for workplace policy guidance, and recurring annual learning opportunities for staff.



# Helping Caregivers Stay Well

This year, CAPSA launched a brand-new training initiative in response to the concerns of caregivers around burnout, frustration and fatigue when caring for people who use substances. The Practice of Compassionate Care – Staying Well While Helping Others, provides a unique perspective on compassion fatigue and delivers practical tools and skills to practice healthy ways of demonstrating compassion and help counter frustration and fatigue. The training is accompanied by CAPSA's first ever workbook to support participants in their continued learning.



This new offering has led to the signing of an MOU with a health organization and referrals that have led to embedding Compassionate Care training into organizational strategic plans.

# We Can't Do It Without Allies

CAPSA brings positive change to organizations through partnerships with allied organizations and individuals. Eight health units/public health agencies and six Ontario Health teams across the region have accepted training and have broadened their relationship with CAPSA, embedding the principles of Substance Use eHealth into their organizations. Additionally, CAPSA proudly partnered with Indigenous organizations earlier this year, including the Cree Board of Health and Social Services through a co-led project. This partnership brought stigma and Substance Use Health education to Cree communities, as well as Sioux Lookout First Nations, through training engagements. CAPSA has also influenced organizational change with public safety bodies like paramedics and police, and connected with 7 hospitals in Ottawa and surrounding areas.

In many of these cases, CAPSA trained the entire staff including their leadership. Substance Use Health was embedded into organizational strategies, strategic priorities and department names. Through this approach, the use of our organizational assessment tools led to policy improvements. This work also allowed us to co-develop several impactful knowledge products.



# Substance Use Health Coming to Workplaces

This year we unveiled CAPSA's first of its kind tool-kit aimed to equipping workplaces to better support the Substance Use Health of employees and overall wellness of organizations! Our offering includes customized expert guidance, a variety of evidence-informed assessment and measurement tools, policy recommendations, best practices and resources to normalize conversations and implement policies around Substance Use Health. These tools aim to cultivate a proactive and non-judgemental workplace culture and build a more inclusive environment where employees feel safe seeking supports and services for to support their Substance Use health goals.



# Research Leading to Action

CAPSA focuses on research that will make a practical impact now. Our research uniquely blends scientific, practice-based, and lived and living evidence. We prioritize processes that are co-led with those most affected by research outcomes and build partner capacity to design projects that are inclusive and participatory.

Over the past year, our research has been showcased in Canada and around the world.

## National Discourse

We contributed to the Debates of the Senate *Health-Centred Approach to Substance Use Bill* by Honourable Senator Mary Coyle.

## International Reach

We shared our findings on systemic stigma and Substance Use Health at the Organization of American States and Dianova International.

## Extensive Media Coverage

CAPSA was featured in the Toronto Star, Globe & Mail, National Post, and Bell Let's Talk 2023 Campaign.

# Research Leading to Action

We drive our own original research and partner with other researchers in expert panel membership, research question refinement, selection of methodology and outcome measures; data collection, analysis, and interpretation; and knowledge dissemination.

To date, our evidence base includes...



**Focus groups and interviews with 595 people across Canada who regularly use Mental Health and Substance Use Health services.**



**Training feedback from healthcare providers, researchers and policymakers (n=10,120 participants).**



**Three national surveys (n=4,023; n=2,018; n=255).**



**Evaluations from service users (n=27,253) as governance leads at coordinated regional and provincial access tables, and 42 other regional, provincial, and national bodies.**

# Co-Leading Systems Change Through Partnership

Since 2019, CAPSA has supported Ontario Health in system redesign activities through various advisory and oversight committee roles, as well as CAPSAs co-leadership role in AccessMHA - a coordinated Mental/Substance Use Health promotion and care model.

CAPSA partnered to increase capacity for public health promotion research and policy that upholds international drug policy commitments through Civil Society Working Group on United Nations Drug Policy membership. Most recently, we were a Canadian delegate to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 67th Commission on Narcotic Drugs.



# Delivering the Message Far and Wide

This year, CAPSA reached more than 1,650 stakeholders through 10 presentations at major conferences across Canada and at international fora. We brought our unique and transformative approaches to dismantling systemic stigma through the principle of Substance Use Health and presented innovative solutions for improvements to policy and practice, informed by CAPSA led research and our own expertise.

Events such as the Issues of Substances Conference (held by CCSA), The United Nations Commissions of Narcotic Drugs in Vienna, the Organization of American States CICAD Session, The Canadian Psychological Association Convention, The Centre of Innovation in Campus Mental Health, Oshki-Nochmoowin (held by Nokiiwin Tribal Council), Mahmow-gah-boom-seh-min (held by Nishnawbe Aski Nation), Thriving Together: Building Stronger Helper Communities (held by Thunder Bay District Health Unit), and Driving Experience Into Action (held by Frayme) brought together many professionals and leaders in health and social sectors.



A close-up photograph of a woman with long, straight brown hair. She is looking slightly upwards and to her right with a thoughtful expression. She is wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark top. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

# It's Time People in Canada Said, "Let's Talk" About Substance Use Health

Bell Let's Talk placed CAPSA front and centre in this year's annual campaign. As 1 of 5 organizations selected to be featured in the campaign, millions of people across Canada learned about CAPSA and Substance Use Health. We were appeared on multiple sports channels, commercials, YouTube ads, social media, and websites, prompting curiosity and open dialogue on where to find the right supports to explore our relationships to substances and address our health. The campaign was a huge success! We immediately saw a significant increase of traffic and new users to our website, especially to find All People, All Pathways meetings attendance soared.



# WOW Keeps Getting Bigger

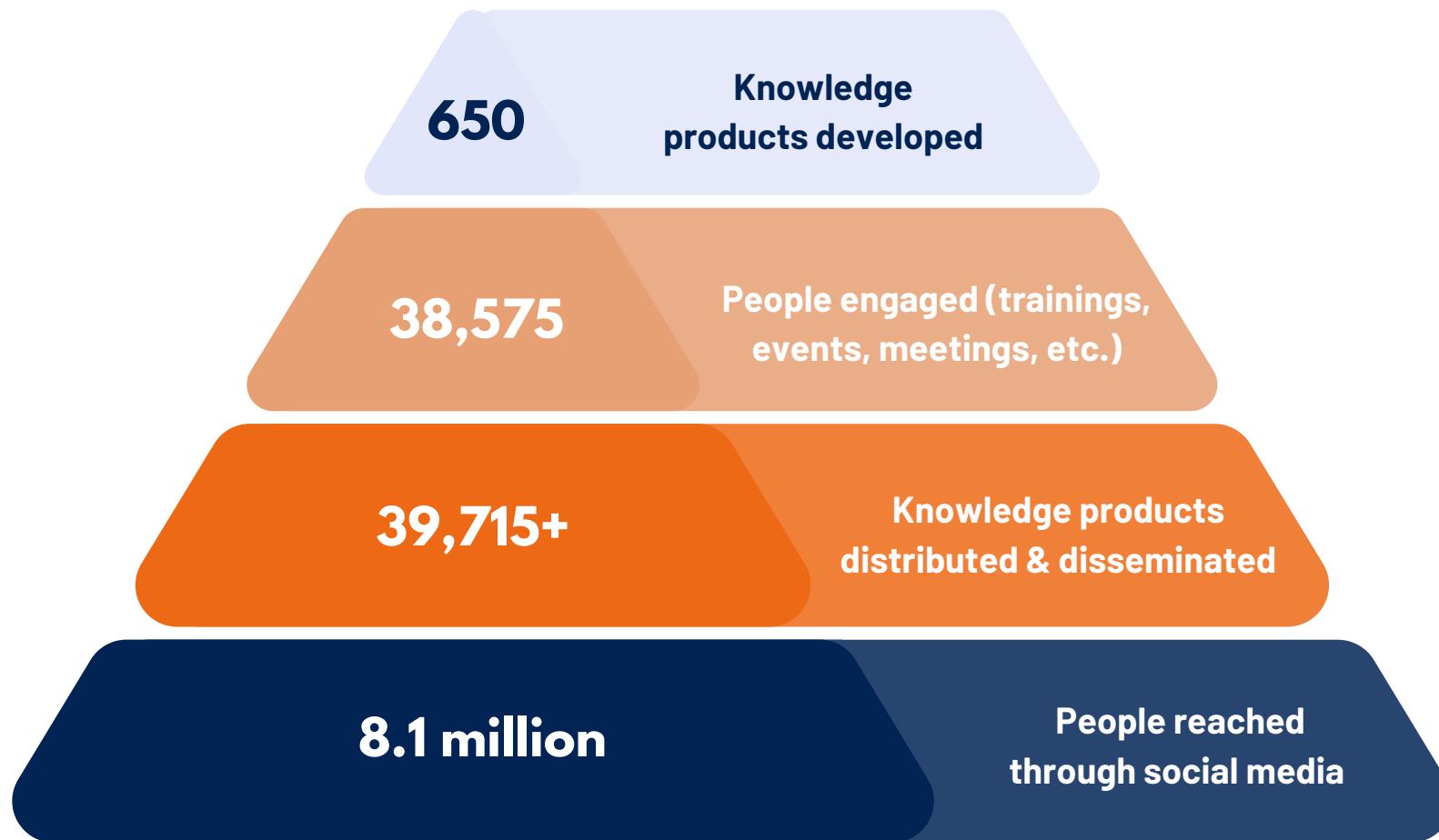
Ottawa City Hall once again welcomed the Working on Wellness (WOW) festival in September. This stigma-breaking celebration brings together Substance Use Health, Mental Health and Physical Health services in one place to share information and resources, while celebrating all pathways to health and wellness. The festival serves a model of what an inclusive, accessible and integrated health system can achieve.

We were joined by 110 community partners and more than 2,000 people who came together to celebrate wellness and receive information on services available in Ottawa. On stage Mayor Mark Sutcliffe provided a *WOW Day* proclamation; Elder Claudette Commanda acted as the EMCEE; Grandmother Irene Compton provided a traditional blessing through song; and we heard from Alisha Tharani, CEO from AMHO; Dr. Alexander Caudarella, CEO of CCSA and Steve Vachon, Director of Montfort Renaissance. They spoke to the importance of dismantling substance use stigma, applying a Substance Use Health approach and increasing access to quality care across sectors.

CAPSAs was proud to honour Dr. Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health for Ottawa Public Health as ally of the year for her ongoing work in promoting system change within public health.

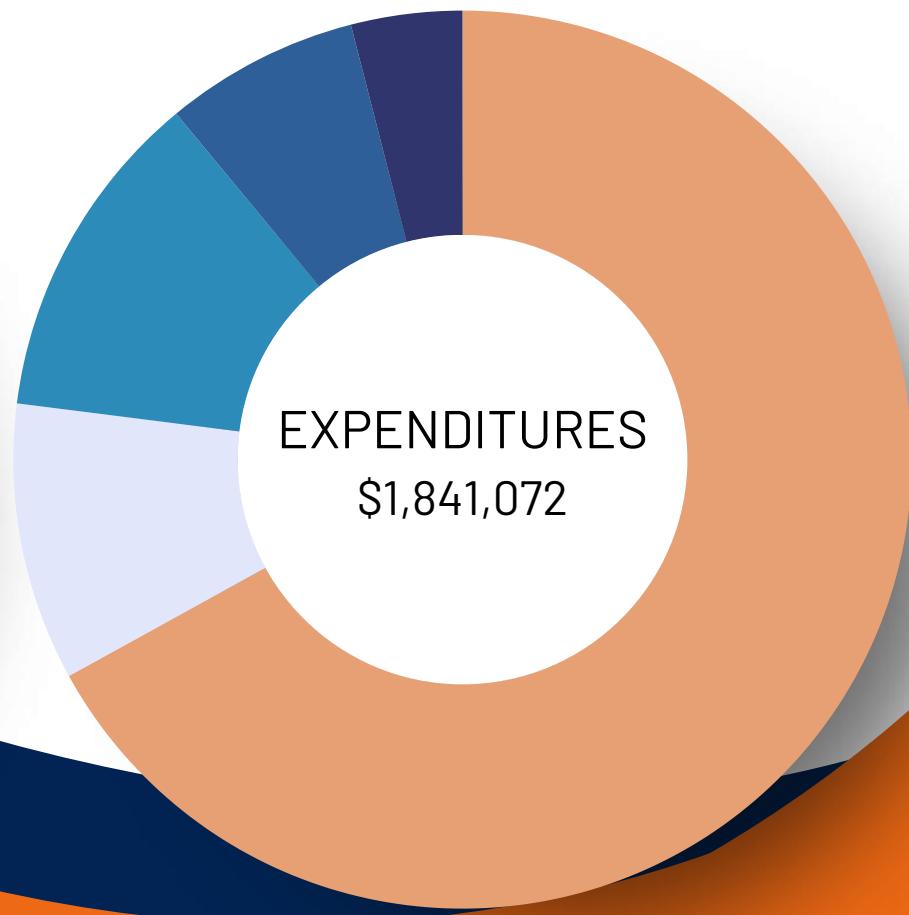
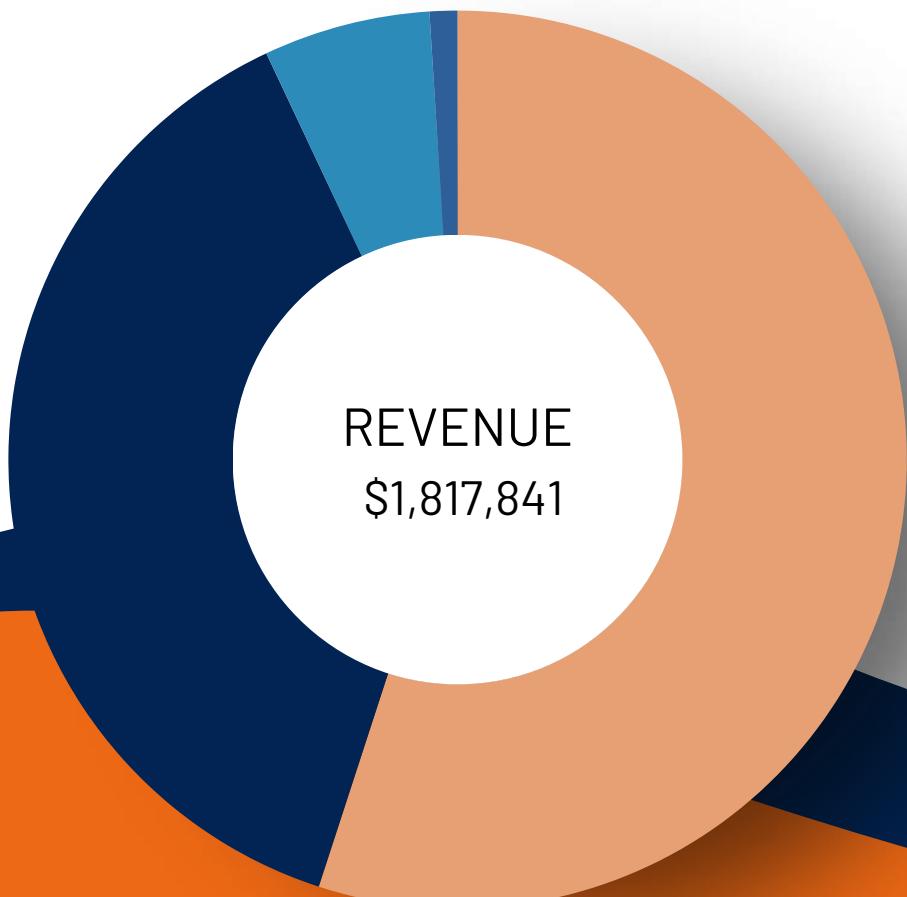


# Overall CAPSA Reach to Date



# Financial Highlights

Summarized Statement of Activities – Fiscal Year April 2023 - March 2024



55% | \$1,002,202  
Government  
6% | \$104,517  
Donations & Sponsorship

38% | \$687,656  
Education & Consulting  
1% | \$23,466  
Other Income

67% | \$1,231,440  
Salaries and Benefits  
12% | \$229,801  
Administration  
7% | \$125,581  
Meetings and Events  
4% | \$72,504  
Other Expenses

Net Revenue: -\$23,231

# CAPSA

Bringing Expertise to Needed Systems Change



[www.capsa.ca](http://www.capsa.ca)

[info@capsa.ca](mailto:info@capsa.ca)

