

Psychology is for Everyone

May 23, 2024
Manitoba Legislature
Psychology Month
Reception



Mental Health Needs in Manitoba

“Without mental health, there can be no true physical health.”

- Mental Health needs remain high
 - 28% of adult Manitobans are diagnosed with a mental disorder (MCHP, 2018)
 - Up to 70% of problems brought to family physicians have a mental health component (Virgo, 2018)
 - 1 in 7 children aged 6-19 received a mental health diagnosis between 2009 and 2013 (Chartier et al., 2016)
- Manitoba’s Mental Health Budget has historically been less than 6% of Health Budget
- To have parity between health and mental health, it should be 12% of the health budget (Royal Society of Canada & CPA, 2022)



In Canada, every \$1 invested in covering psychological services would yield \$2.00 (\$1.78 to \$3.15) in savings to society.

Mental health problems cost 50 billion a year in Canada.

52% of Disability Claims (over 13 weeks missed work) of Federal employees due to mental health conditions

Manulife's increase in mental health benefits decreased short-term disability claims and improved return to work from 55% to 86%.

What is a Psychologist?

- Cost-effective, specialist, health care providers who assess, diagnose and treat a range of complex mental health disorders, cognitive/developmental disorders, and chronic physical health conditions (e.g. chronic pain, insomnia)
- Doctoral degree – 10-12 years training
- Regulated Profession
- Deliver evidence-based treatments tailored to specific conditions and to the patient for better outcomes
- Provide consultation and supervision
- Design, implement and evaluate initiatives at a program or system level
- As scientist-practitioners, understand and conduct scientific research to improve assessments and treatments

Benefits of Psychological Therapies

- Evidence-based psychological treatments are at least as effective and often more effective than pharmacotherapy for certain mental health conditions. E.g. depression, anxiety
- Effective component for pain management
- Relapse rates for psychological treatments are lower than pharmacotherapy
- Time-limited
- Evidence-based psychological therapies are more cost-effective than pharmacotherapy
- Few, if any, side effects for psychological therapies compared to pharmacotherapy



Hunsley, Elliott, & Therrien (2013); Hunsley (2002)

Current Access Issues to see a Psychologist

Public Health Care

- Limited number of psychologist positions within the health system
- Salaries not competitive leading to loss of psychologists in the public system
- Waitlists continue to lengthen

Private Services

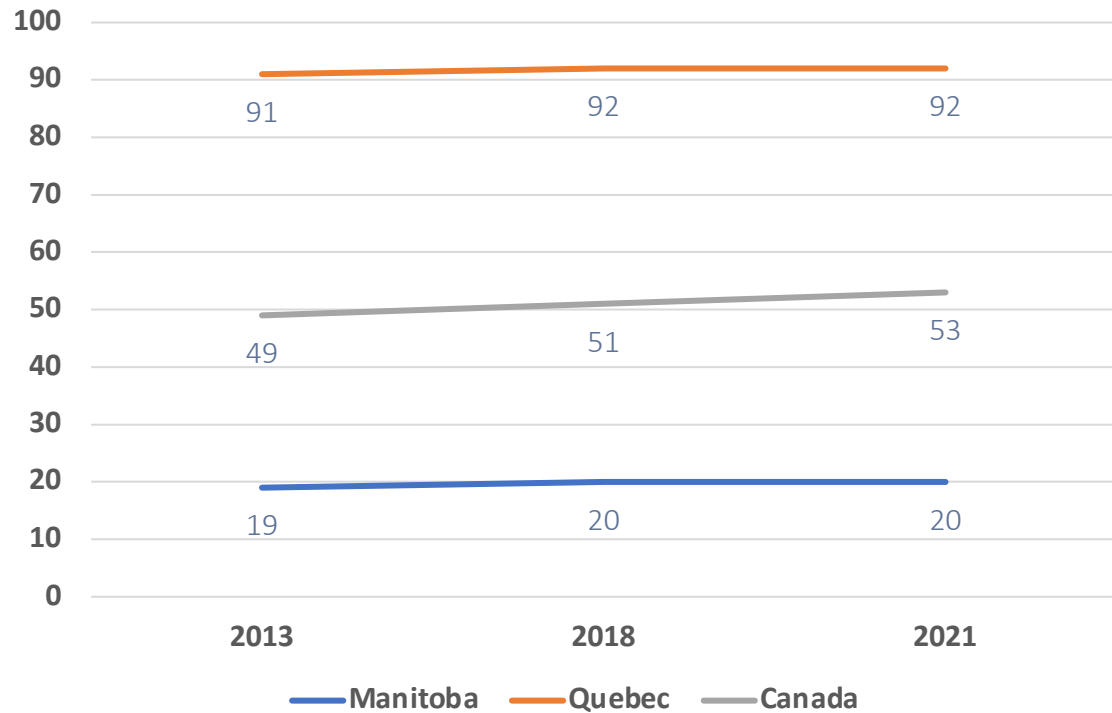
- Unlike psychiatrists, psychologists are not covered by Manitoba Health
- Many Manitobans have no or limited extended health benefits (dosage inadequate for effective treatment)
- Growing waitlists

Nanos Poll (2020):

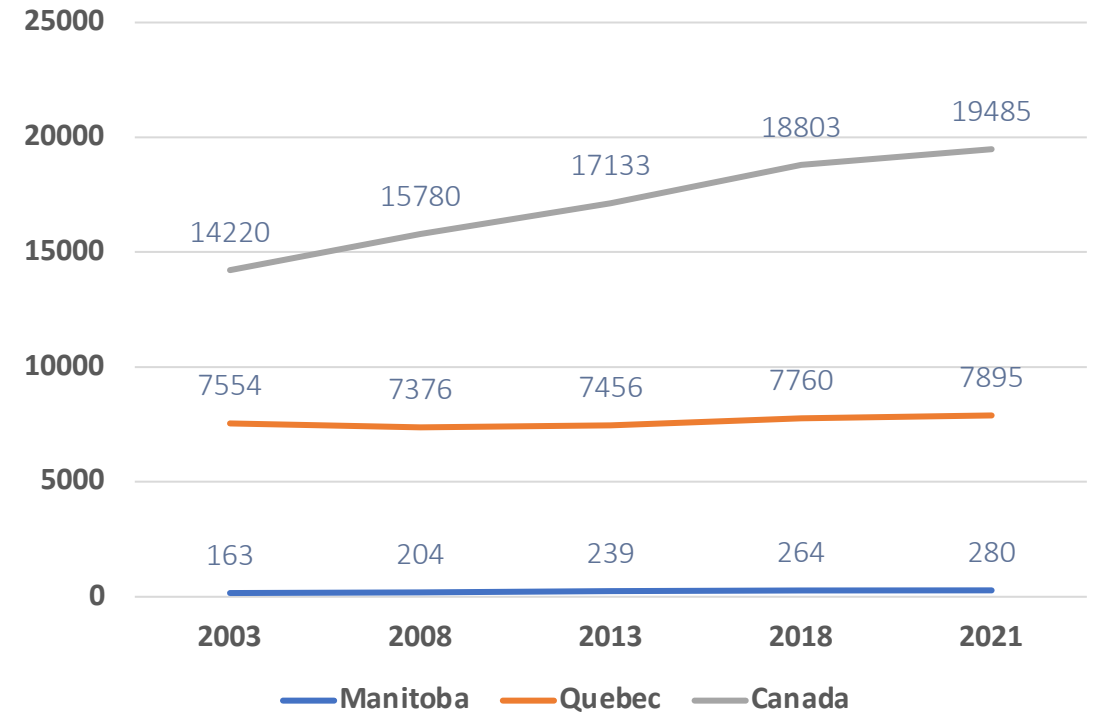
- 86% of Manitobans support improving access to psychologists through publicly-funded health plans
- 79% of Manitobans say cost and 74% wait times are significant barriers to deciding to access a psychologist

Among Canada's 10 provinces, Manitoba ranks 10th in terms of psychologists per capita

Psychologists Per 100, 000 Population
2013 - 2021



Number of Registered Psychologists
2003 - 2021



Note. Data from Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI).

Addressing labour shortage in Manitoba

Key arguments from Peachey (2017) and Virgo (2018):

- Access to psychological services in Manitoba is limited
- Significant shortage of child psychologists
- Regional disparity in service access
- **Increase psychologists to match national average:**
 - Protect existing and effective roles in tertiary centres
 - Promote educational and recruitment initiatives
 - Train clinical psychologists at the doctoral level and integrate into team-based care, regional mental health, and substance use/abuse centres
 - Have roles clearly defined and including team-based work, consultation and assessment, delivery of specialized evidence-based therapy and capacity building for other team members
 - Increase number of Child Psychologists and those based rurally

Small Steps in the Right Direction

- 22 new public psychology positions created in the past 3 years
- Gradual expansion of the Clinical Health Psychology Residency program
- Doubling the number of spots in the Clinical Psychology Training Program, from 8 to 16, over two years





Next Steps: Training

1. Train More Psychologists

- a) Recruit and retain University of Manitoba Faculty to accept graduate students
- b) Recruit and retain practicum and residency supervisors
- c) Create a Psy.D. program in Manitoba



Next Steps: Recruit & Retain

2. Use Effective Recruitment and Retention Strategies

- a) Current large gap between public and private sector income requires a large market adjustment
- b) Allow flexible hiring practice
- c) Maintain autonomy of practice in public system
- d) Apply similar recruitment and retention strategies for rural health care providers to psychologist positions



Next Steps: Improve Access

3. Continue to Increase Public Psychology Positions
 - a) Flexibly hire residents into public positions
 - b) Create additional positions in high need and inter-disciplinary areas
 - i. Child and Adolescent
 - ii. Rural and Northern
 - iii. Geriatric
 - iv. Primary Care
4. Consider publicly funding all psychologist services



