



## NEWS RELEASE

*For immediate release*

### **CMHA's Talk Today program celebrating 10<sup>th</sup> season in junior hockey**

**(Toronto, Oct. 5, 2023)** – With the 2023-24 junior hockey season underway, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario Division and CMHA branches across the country are celebrating a major milestone – the 10<sup>th</sup> season of their sports mental health program, Talk Today.

One of the most comprehensive mental health awareness and suicide prevention programs for amateur sports in Canada, Talk Today aims to promote suicide prevention, the mental health of young athletes and to spread awareness about the benefits of positive mental health throughout communities across the country.

Launched in 2014 as a partnership between CMHA Ontario and the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), Talk Today has since expanded into the top two levels of junior hockey nationally – the Canadian Hockey League (CHL), including the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League and Western Hockey League, as well as eight member Jr. A leagues in the Canadian Junior Hockey League (CJHL). Beyond junior hockey, local CMHAs have also established partnerships with several post-secondary, minor and community-based sports organizations through Talk Today.

“Talk Today wouldn’t be celebrating this milestone without the dedication and leadership of CMHA branches who facilitate this program through local partnerships with teams across the country,” said CMHA Ontario CEO Camille Quenneville. “We’re also grateful for our hockey partnerships that have been a driving force for this program since the beginning, especially the CHL for its amazing fundraising efforts in support of Talk Today over the years, and the Fifth Line Foundation and National Hockey League (NHL) Foundation for their support of our CJHL partnership. We’re so proud of what Talk Today has become and so many people have had a hand in getting the program to this point.”

“The CHL is proud to be a partner of the CMHA and its Talk Today program to help do our part in creating more mental health awareness in communities across North America,” said CHL president Dan MacKenzie. “Thanks to Talk Today, our athletes have a greater understanding of mental health issues and where to get help for themselves or others if needed. Talk Today has helped to set the standard for athlete support across the CHL’s three member leagues and we look forward to continuing this partnership and our efforts alongside the CMHA in support of mental health.”

“Talk Today has become an important part of our athlete support programming in the CJHL,” said CJHL president Andy Harkness. “We appreciate the guidance local CMHAs provide to our member clubs, as well as the funding from the Fifth Line Foundation and NHL Foundation that makes it all happen. Congrats to CMHA on this milestone.”

Since 2014, nearly 8,600 individuals have received mental health and suicide awareness training through the program. The vast majority of individuals trained are athletes (7,598), but coaches (381), staff (217), billets and parents (400) have also participated in training, helping to create cultures of openness within athlete support networks.

In addition to mental health education, local Talk Today partnerships between CMHA branches and sports organizations provide athletes with connections to community supports through a dedicated mental health coach, as well as opportunities to raise mental health awareness through community events. In junior hockey, February is Talk Today month, during which teams and CMHAs bring attention to mental health through awareness games and social media content.

For more information about Talk Today, visit [www.talktoday.ca](http://www.talktoday.ca), and [subscribe to the new Talk Today podcast](#) on your preferred podcast app.

**About the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario:**

*Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario is a not-for-profit, charitable organization funded by the provincial government. We work to improve the lives of all Ontarians through leadership, collaboration and continual pursuit of excellence in community-based mental health and addictions services. Our vision is a society that embraces and invests in the mental health of all people. We are a trusted advisor to government, contributing to health systems development through policy formulation and recommendations that promote positive mental health. To donate or learn more, please visit [ontario.cmha.ca](http://ontario.cmha.ca).*

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