

For Immediate Release:

Perinatal Mental Health Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador hosts First Perinatal Mental Health Symposium

St. John's, Newfoundland, October 20, 2024: Join the [Perinatal Mental Health Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador](#) for the **first ever Perinatal Mental Health Symposium NL** to discuss evidence-based practice, share resources, tools and support networks, and bridge connections within the community and care providers, held on November 3rd, 2024.

SYMPOSIUM

Enhancing Perinatal Mental Health: Empowering Communities and Care Providers

The Perinatal Mental Health Symposium aims to strengthen community awareness and equip healthcare providers with the knowledge and tools necessary to support perinatal mental health during pregnancy and postpartum. This symposium will bring together healthcare professionals, community leaders, researchers, and advocates, general public to explore effective strategies, share best practices, and foster collaboration and information sharing in addressing perinatal mental health challenges.

Dr. Archana Vidyasankar, Chair of the Alliance, reminds us that: “The perinatal mental health journey can be a complex time for many individuals and families. There are many who face stress, illness and complications that can result in serious mental illness. These issues can include serious depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and psychosis. What’s even more shocking is that suicide is a leading cause of perinatal death in Canada.”

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH IN NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

It is estimated that, in Newfoundland and Labrador, 28% of new parents will experience a perinatal mood and anxiety disorder (compared with the national average of 23%). This means that approximately 1000 births per year in this province may result in mental illnesses, which could benefit from support and treatment.

Left untreated, perinatal mental illnesses can lead to premature labour, admission to the neonatal intensive care unit, increased risks of obstetrical complications, lower breastfeeding rates, and poor fetal and infant outcomes (potential cognitive, emotional and behavioral impairments).

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH ALLIANCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

The Perinatal Mental Health Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador (PMHANL) is a group of volunteers representing: persons with lived experience; professionals in clinical practice; volunteers and professionals in not-for-profit organizations dealing with mental health, public health, early childhood education and other areas of intervention; advocates for mothers, infants and families; policy advisors; and other persons interested in healthy families

The Alliance has several province-wide objectives, include the following:

- to advocate for improved, coordinated, province-wide perinatal mental health programs, supports and services;
- to recommend community and research-informed strategies to address barriers to support and treatment;
- to raise public and professional awareness of perinatal mental health issues in the province; and
- to inform and educate the public and professionals about perinatal mental health issues.

The Perinatal Mental Health Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador is poised to make significant changes! Anyone interested in joining the Alliance as a member, is invited to visit <https://www.pmhanl.com>.

CONTACT:

Rozane El Masri

pmhanlcoordinator@gmail.com

On behalf of the Perinatal Mental Health Alliance

Symposium Backgrounder

Enhancing Perinatal Mental Health: Empowering Communities and Care Providers

The Perinatal Mental Health Symposium aims to strengthen community awareness and equip healthcare providers with the knowledge and tools necessary to support perinatal mental health during pregnancy and postpartum. This symposium will bring together healthcare professionals, community leaders, researchers, and advocates, general public to explore effective strategies, share best practices, and foster collaboration and information sharing in addressing perinatal mental health challenges.

What can you expect from this event?

Network with like-minded folks from various backgrounds, organizations, care providing roles, and community members; Expert insights on current trends and future directions in perinatal mental health; Panelist perspectives on challenges and opportunities in perinatal mental health care.

Annual General Meeting for PMHANL:

This symposium will conclude with the AGM for the PMHANL, including an election of new members to the Board of Directors.

When?

Sunday, November 3rd, 2024 from 1:00 - 5:00 pm (NL Time Zone)

Where?

MUN Medical School Atrium, 300 Prince Philip Drive, St. John's NL

Who?

From clinicians to community members, care providers, family and support persons, all are welcome!

Join us in advancing perinatal mental health care by fostering collaboration, sharing knowledge, and empowering healthcare providers and communities to support maternal mental health throughout the perinatal period. Registration and event details can be found:

<https://www.pmhanl.com/event-details/enhancing-perinatal-mental-health-empowering-communities-and-care-providers>

More information about the Alliance can be found on its website www.pmhanl.com or by contacting Rozane El Masri at pmhanlcoordinator@gmail.com.