



Ontario Health

Mental Health and Addictions
Centre of Excellence

Memorandum

Date: November 14, 2024

To: Health Services Providers

From: Ontario Health
Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence

Re: Staged Screening and Assessment (SS&A) Decommissioning

Dear providers,

Completion of Staged Screening and Assessment tools (SS&A) have been required for individuals accessing care for substance use since 2015. Ongoing feedback and consultations with providers and people with lived experience regarding these tools have highlighted that the mandate and tools are no longer meeting their original and intended purpose and that they can create barriers to care.

After careful review, and in close collaboration with the Substance Use Disorders Provincial Advisory Table, the Ministry of Health, colleagues in the Ontario Health Regions and the Provincial System Support Program (PSSP) and Shkaabe Makwa at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), we are writing to notify you that completion of the SS&A tools is no longer required.

Changes to the suite of SS&A tools are as follows:

- GAIN Short Screener (GAIN-SS) CAMH Modified will continue to be available for use and download past March 31, 2025
- POSIT/MMS are available for use in the public domain
- Provincial supports for GAIN Q3 MI ONT will be removed as of March 31, 2025. This includes access to the assessment via Catalyst along with training and user support provided by PSSP at CAMH.

In this period of transition, as of **November 14, 2024**, completion of SS&A tools is no longer a requirement for access to funded addictions services, in both hospital and community settings. If the assessment tool is used, clients cannot be required to answer or complete questions in the assessment.

To support organizations with this transition, the following have been put in place:

- Services provided by the Provincial System Support Program at CAMH will continue through 2024-25, with decreasing capacity through the year.
- All addictions providers should develop plans for retaining completed assessments in alignment with your obligations as health information custodians.
- As of November 14, 2024, HSP's are no longer required to use the "Addictions staged screening and assessment tools (2015)", set out in Schedule C of the Multi-Sector Service Accountability Agreement (MSAA). MSAA changes will be shared with providers in the coming months.

Ontario Health's Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence and the Substance Use Disorders Provincial Advisory Table are working on supports for this transition, including guidance for screening and assessment to support organizations in choosing evidence-based screening and assessment tools that meet organizations' clinical needs. This guidance is planned to be released in the next few months.

Thank you for your efforts to continually improve care for persons seeking support for substance use. And thank you as well to everyone who participated in consultations about this issue or who provided feedback – your advice and insights were very valuable.

If you have questions, or would like to provide any feedback, please contact MHACoE@OntarioHealth.ca.

Sincerely,

Graham Woodward
Vice President
Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence

Dr. Paul Kurdyak
Vice President, Clinical
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CC:

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