

**Elgin St. Thomas Site**

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**From the Office of Dr. Joyce Lock, Medical Officer of Health, Southwestern Public Health**

## **Risk management advised for postpartum mood disorders**

[Postpartum mental health visits increased during the first nine months of the pandemic](#), indicating a need for accessible mental health supports for these individuals.

Health sector partners – including public health – advise discussions with primary care providers when PPMD is suspected. As such, primary care providers are advised to use risk management when identifying and destigmatizing postpartum mood disorders – both for the mother who may be experiencing it, and her allies, such as her partner, family and support network.

Specific to St. Thomas and Elgin, the Canadian Mental Health Association initiated a postpartum mood disorder coalition alongside member organizations, including Southwestern Public Health, Central Community Health Centre, EarlyOn, Fresh Start Support Services, and Family and Children's Services. This work was put on hold due to COVID-19 in 2020.

**CMHA and its member organizations are now resuming in-person PPMD support programming in Elgin County to offer more than virtual supports for women during pregnancy and postpartum, and their allies.**

**St. Thomas-Elgin General Hospital's mother and baby unit nurses, and a counsellor from Elgin Counselling and Mediation have also joined the coalition.**

### **ACTION ITEMS FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS:**

- Initiate discussions about PPMD with women and allies during pre-natal visits, highlighting misconceptions. Resources:
  - [PCMCH: Care Pathway for the Management of Perinatal Mental Health](#)
  - [PCMCH: Perinatal Mental Health Guidance Document](#)
  - [CMHA: Postpartum Brochure for Patients](#)
- Continue to engage in PPMD assessments at all pre-natal and post-partum visits, including during well baby visits.

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- Direct patients with suspected PPMD or allyship to [CMHA](#) for credible resources.
- In Elgin, direct patients interested in PPMD support groups in Elgin to call 519-631-9900 ext. 1400 or visit the St. Thomas EarlyON Facebook Page ([link](#)) or Elgin Counselling and Mediation website ([link](#)).
- Crisis support through CMHA is accessible here: <https://www.cmhaelgin.ca/services/crisis-outreach/>
- Advocate for PPMD awareness by sharing social media assets published by CMHA and its coalition members. SWPH plans to share these monthly.

Thank you,

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